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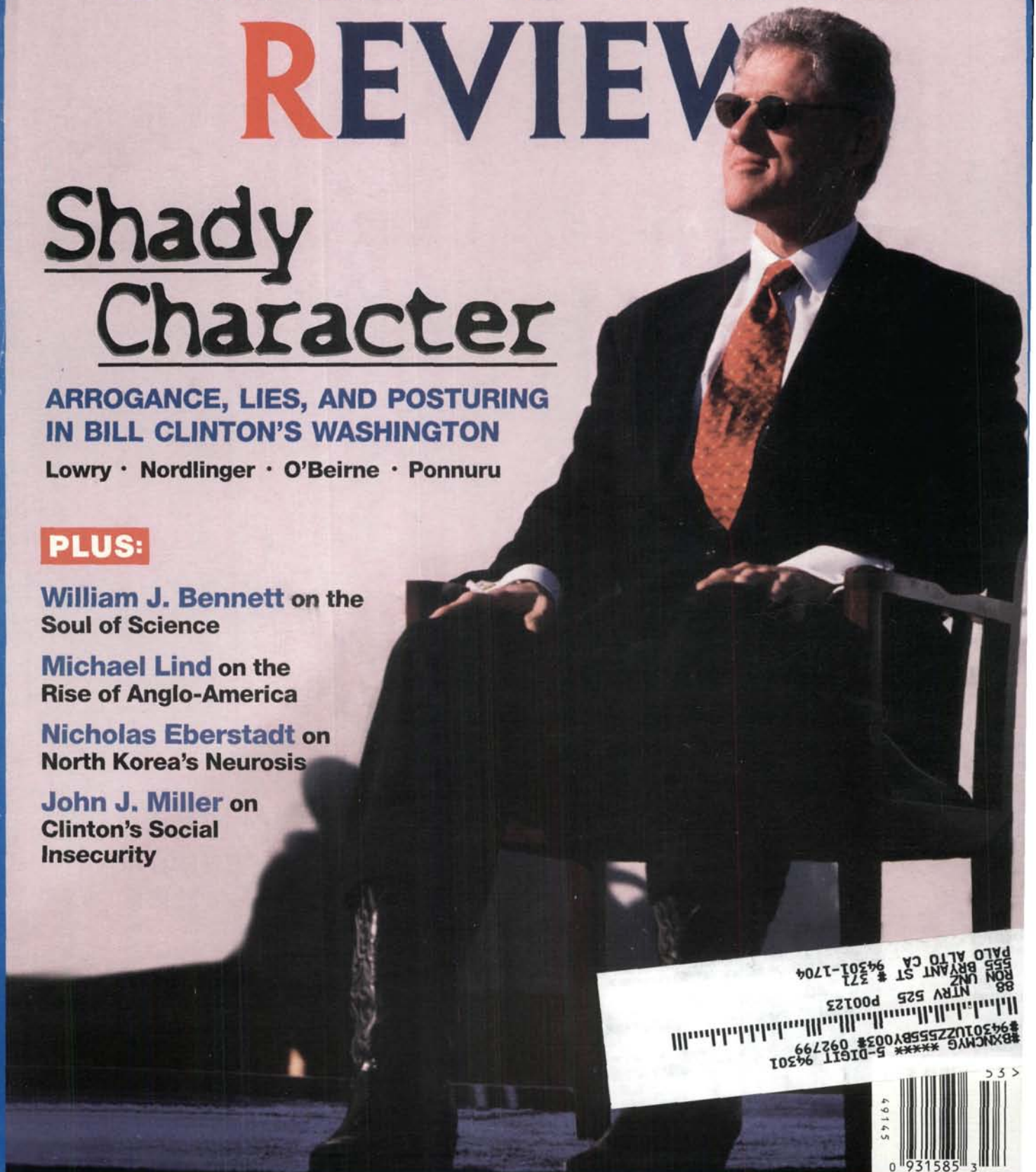

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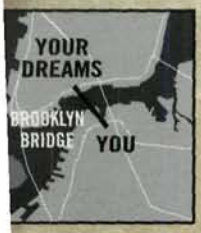

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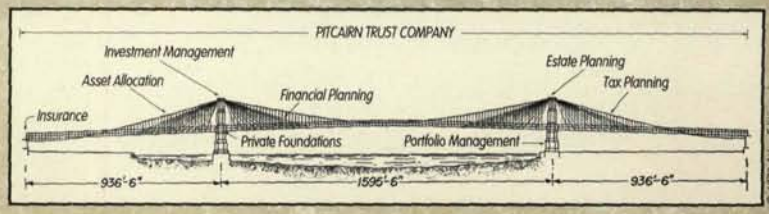

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http://www.nationalreview.com

NATIONAL REVIEW (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by National Review, Inc., at 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. ©National Review, Inc., 1998. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc., to Editorial Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc., to Circulation Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668; phone, 815-734-1232, Monday–Friday, 7:30 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., National Review, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Circulation Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668. Printed in the U.S.A.

RATES: $59.00 a year (25 issues). Add $21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts unless return postage or, better, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

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December 31 issue; printed December 16

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■ LETTERS ■

CHECK AGAIN

Readers of Johnathan Sunley's article ["Checking Slovakia," Nov. 9] may conclude that Slovakia's ex-prime minister, Vladimir Meciar, was a misunderstood democrat defeated by misguided Westerners. The fact is that Slovak voters, who know Mr. Meciar well, decisively rejected him on the basis of his government's track record.

In plain words, Mr. Meciar consistently violated democratic principles in governing Slovakia. His administration declined to investigate obvious political crimes, ignored Constitutional Court decisions, secretly privatized national assets, and turned the public television and radio networks into pro-government propaganda outlets.

This behavior led the United States and its NATO allies to conclude that Mr. Meciar lacked a genuine commitment to democracy. When NATO considered potential new members in 1997, the allies declined to accept Slovakia.

Mr. Sunley's article misrepresented the facts that have informed U.S. policy. We have never campaigned for or against any party or politician. We have spoken out only to defend principles that we believe represent abiding American values. Slovak voters, as they should, have had the last word.

Ralph R. Johnson
United States Ambassador
Bratislava, Slovak Republic

MODERN MATURITY

I've been a loyal *NR* subscriber since my teens, and I've always thought the magazine promoted the conservative principle of civility. I was therefore shocked to read your call for seven-term U.S. senator Strom Thurmond to step down ["The Week," Nov. 23]. As we say in the South, this demonstrates incredibly bad manners. Even though the conservative statesman turns 96 in December, he's in fine health, thank you, and he still has one of the best constituent-service staffs on Capitol Hill. The graveyards of South Carolina are full of politicians, Democrat and Republican, who waited for the senator to retire. I wager he'll outlive South Carolina's incoming Democratic governor.

Phil Kent
Augusta, Ga.

AVANT-GARDNER

Imagine my delight when, having just re-read Tom Wolfe's *Painted Word*, I found James Gardner's brilliant send-up of contemporary-art criticism in your November 23 issue ["Altogether Rothko"]. The breathless reverence that Gardner brings to praising the "hieratic, even sacral" qualities of Mark Rothko's "smoldering, emberous canvases" is a perfect parody of the overwrought verbalizing that Wolfe blames for fueling modern art's drive toward unalloyed flatness and inflated art-market values. In fact, Gardner's eloquence is almost sufficient to persuade a skeptical reader that there really is something "throbbingly real and important" about Rothko's crude colorblocks—or is my irony meter miscalibrated?

Carol Staswick
Berkeley, Calif.

FINAL JUDGMENT

In "Bar Brawl" [Nov. 23], Daniel Troy denounces the American Bar Association's efforts to help state and local bars develop institutional mechanisms for responding to the criticism of judges and courts under warranted circumstances.

Mr. Troy's disdain for the ABA's response plan comes as no surprise. He clearly stated his opposition in testimony before the ABA Commission on Separation of Powers and Judicial Independence at its second hearing on December 13, 1996. What does come as a surprise, however, is his apparent disregard for factual accuracy and his willingness to malign the association's efforts to protect judicial independence, especially in light of his commission testimony. "[O]ne side sees the judiciary as under siege," Mr. Troy said in 1996. "The other side sees the judges sitting on top of the throne governing the world. . . . So I think that both sides need to reach out to one another and talk to one another, articulate their concerns and try . . . to bridge this . . . gap that I think is really very dangerous and sad."

We agree.

Alfred P. Carlton Jr.
Chair, ABA Special Committee on Judicial Independence
Chicago, Ill.

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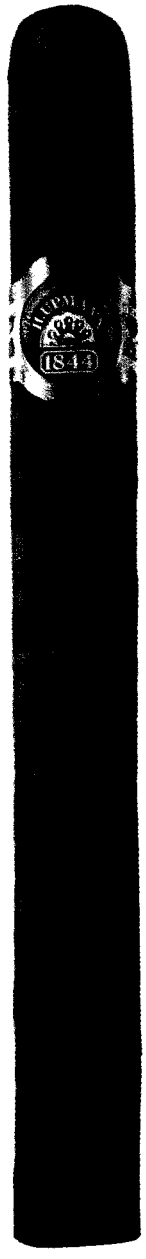

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ Rep. **Zoe Lofgren** (D., Calif.) on House impeachment vote: "This would put our economy in the tank, it could destabilize the entire world." . . . **Abe Hirschfeld**, New York parking-lot mogul who offered to pay **Paula Jones** $1 million to settle her lawsuit against Clinton, arrested for alleged participation in murder-for-hire scheme targeting former business partner.

■ Speaker-in-Waiting **Bob Livingston** asks Rep. **Jennifer Dunn** (R., Wash.) and Rep. **Steve Largent** (R., Okla.), fresh from their defeat in challenging House Majority Leader **Dick Armey**, to deliver GOP response to Clinton's State of the Union speech in January. . . . Campaign documents reveal Rep. **Michael Forbes** (R., N.Y.), a possible 2000 Senate candidate, donated $1,000 to the campaigns of two Democrats this fall: Rep. **Bill Pascrell** (N.J.) and Rep. **Loretta Sanchez** (Calif.). National Republican Congressional Committee spent about $100,000 on the two races. Livingston appoints Forbes to new "assistant to the Speaker" post, along with Rep. **Sonny Callahan** (R., Ala.), Rep. **Buck McKeon** (R., Calif.), and Rep. **Anne Northup** (R., Ky.).

■ Texas Gov. **George W. Bush** hires private eye to investigate self to determine what opponents may find when they start, reports MSNBC. Bush maintains lead over Vice President **Al Gore** in polls. . . . As former Virginia Gov. **George Allen** (R.) prepares to run against Sen. **Charles Robb** (D.) in 2000, Robb wins spot on Finance Committee, a key fundraising perch. . . . Health and Human Services Secretary **Donna Shalala** interested in running for New York Senate seat in 2000, reports *New York Post*. . . . Sen. **Slade Gorton** (R., Wash.) announces intention to run for re-election, probably a safe bet to win unless Gov. **Gary Locke** (D.) gets in race. . . . Several Republican Senators in serious trouble heading into next election cycle. Sen. **Spencer Abraham** (Mich.) already trailing Detroit Mayor **Dennis Archer** (D.) in polls, Sen. **Rod Grams** (Minn.) potentially vulnerable to Reform Party candidate, and Sen. **Rick Santorum** (Penn.) hopes Philadelphia Mayor **Ed Rendell** (D.) vies for governorship in 2002 rather than his job in 2000. . . . Republicans also concerned about potential retirement of 77-year-old Sen. **William Roth** (Del.), causing speculation that Gov. **Tom Carper** (D.) will run.

■ Senate has confirmed 301 federal judges nominated by Clinton. After six years in office, President **Reagan** had 293 nominees approved (to a smaller federal bench). . . . Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 1.2 million abortions in 1996, marking slight increase from 1995. Abortion rate also rose, from 311 per 1,000 pregnancies to 314. Despite this, number of abortion providers nationwide continues to fall, according to **Alan Guttmacher** Institute. . . . Harvard University policy of subsidizing abortions through student health plans sparks campus controversy. . . . Actress **Sharon Stone**: "I believe that if you truly, truly love your children, you need to supply condoms in a place in your home at a quantity that makes it a non-judgmental situation for them to have them. I mean, put 200 condoms in a box in some place in the house where everybody isn't all the time, so that your kids can take them."

■ University of Michigan nixes long-standing plans to name dormitory reading room after popular professor **Carl Cohen**, apparently because Cohen used Freedom of Information Act to obtain admissions data used in current lawsuit challenging school's racial preferences system. . . . Providence College announces it will eliminate three men's sports programs in baseball, golf, and tennis to comply with federal regulations on gender equity, making it latest victim of Education Department oversight. . . . Oregon appeals court rules that state constitution requires health- and life-insurance benefits to partners of gay government employees.

■ *New York Times* reports that **Hughes** Space and Communications gave China satellite and missile secrets without proper authorization, according to Pentagon investigation. . . . Women nearly ten times more likely than men to tear knee ligament during military training, according to study of Naval Academy midshipmen. Reason is women have fewer muscles protecting knee joints. . . . National Journalism Center offers 12-week media internships. January 29 is deadline for spring term applications, April 20 for summer, and August 27 for fall. Contact NJC at 800 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, D.C. 20002, email: njc@dc.infi.net, web: eri-njc.org.

■ Mexican report proposes extending voting rights to emigrants living in U.S., who could make up roughly 15 per cent of Mexican electorate. . . . Heritage Foundation and *Wall Street Journal* release annual *Index of Economic Freedom*, rate 71 national economies as "free" or "mostly free." Hong Kong retains top spot but Singapore closes in. United States ranks sixth. . . . Russian population may shrink by half over next fifty years due to drop in birth rate and rise in death rate. . . . Report reveals $20 million earmarked by European Union for poor Palestinians financed luxury homes for wealthy supporters of **Yasser Arafat**. . . . French authorities have lost track of former Haitian dictator **Jean-Claude Duvalier**, a/k/a. "Baby Doc," and believe he is sick and living as a charity case. . . . Newspaper *Le Figaro* estimates fewer than half of French wash head-to-toe daily.

■ **Peggy Noonan** relates recent story about **Ronald Reagan** showing characteristic optimism in referring to bout with illness: "The best thing about having Alzheimer's is that you always get to meet someone new!" **NR**

"Now, until you've actually attained perfect wisdom, you'll have to learn to evade questions."

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THE WEEK

■ "If [Arkansas representative] Jay Dickey votes to impeach the President, it's probably an indication he will not run for re-election in 2000," said a White House source. "It's suicide—we will make sure it is." In Arkansas, that's a death threat.

ED.'S NOTE: This issue of NATIONAL REVIEW goes to press two days before the scheduled vote on impeachment in the House of Representatives.

■ The arguments in favor of impeaching President William Jefferson Clinton (to follow the idiom of the articles voted by the Judiciary Committee) come down to this: 1) His behavior was disreputable. He deceived the courts and the American people. 2) The gravity of his offense is best measured by the disgusted attention that has been given to what he did. 3) The arguments in his defense have been semantic and legalistic. The argument that the Constitution forbids the process now underway is sheer advocacy based on opportunistic exegesis. 4) The objection that the American people are opposed to impeachment ignores culture lags of historical frequency, including general opposition to the liberation of the slaves, to full participation in the war against Hitler, and to the need to take action against Iraq in 1991. 5) The true test of the stability of the Constitution is its usefulness in liberating the country from miscast faith in a failed leader. 6) The profiles of courage in the contemporary scene will highlight the Republican and Democratic Congressmen who summon the courage to do the right thing.

■ No such honor will attach to those Congressmen who support the posited alternative of censure. A censure resolution that imposed a fine, or a "voluntary payment," on President Clinton would be unconstitutional as a bill of attainder, a change in a sitting President's compensation, and an illegitimate use of the threat of impeachment as a political club. It would thus weaken the presidency to save this President. A censure resolution that imposed no punishment, on the other hand, would have as much force as Congress's resolution demanding free elections in Gabon (a comparison explicitly made by censure advocate Sen. Joe Lieberman). The President's partisans complain bitterly that Republicans are not allowing a vote on censure. But the Constitution provides an option for a Congress confronted by presidential malfeasance, and Congressmen may properly be asked to act on it or not.

■ Yet the fundamental issue is the nature of republican government (N.B.: not government by Republicans). Those who hold power forfeit their right to rule when they misuse it. When the Founders discussed possible motives for misrule, they concentrated on personal factors—avarice, ambition—in a way that can seem naïve in an age of ideology (Alger Hiss did not betray his country for the Bokhara rug). Yet it is equally naïve to ignore the eternal passions of men. If the people's representatives fail to call a bad ruler to account, whatever his motives, then the people effectively forfeit the right to rule themselves. Life and history are long, and a nation can always recover. "There are no lost causes," Russell Kirk liked to remind us, "because there are no gained causes." But it is always better to uphold one's dignity at the moment it is challenged, than to trust to time and our descendants to win it back.

■ President Clinton, in his December 11 non-apology, quoted a stanza of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. His legal team evidently did not vet the whole poem.

> *Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before*
> *I swore—but was I sober when I swore?*
> *And then and then came Spring,*
> *and Rose-in-hand*
> *My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.*

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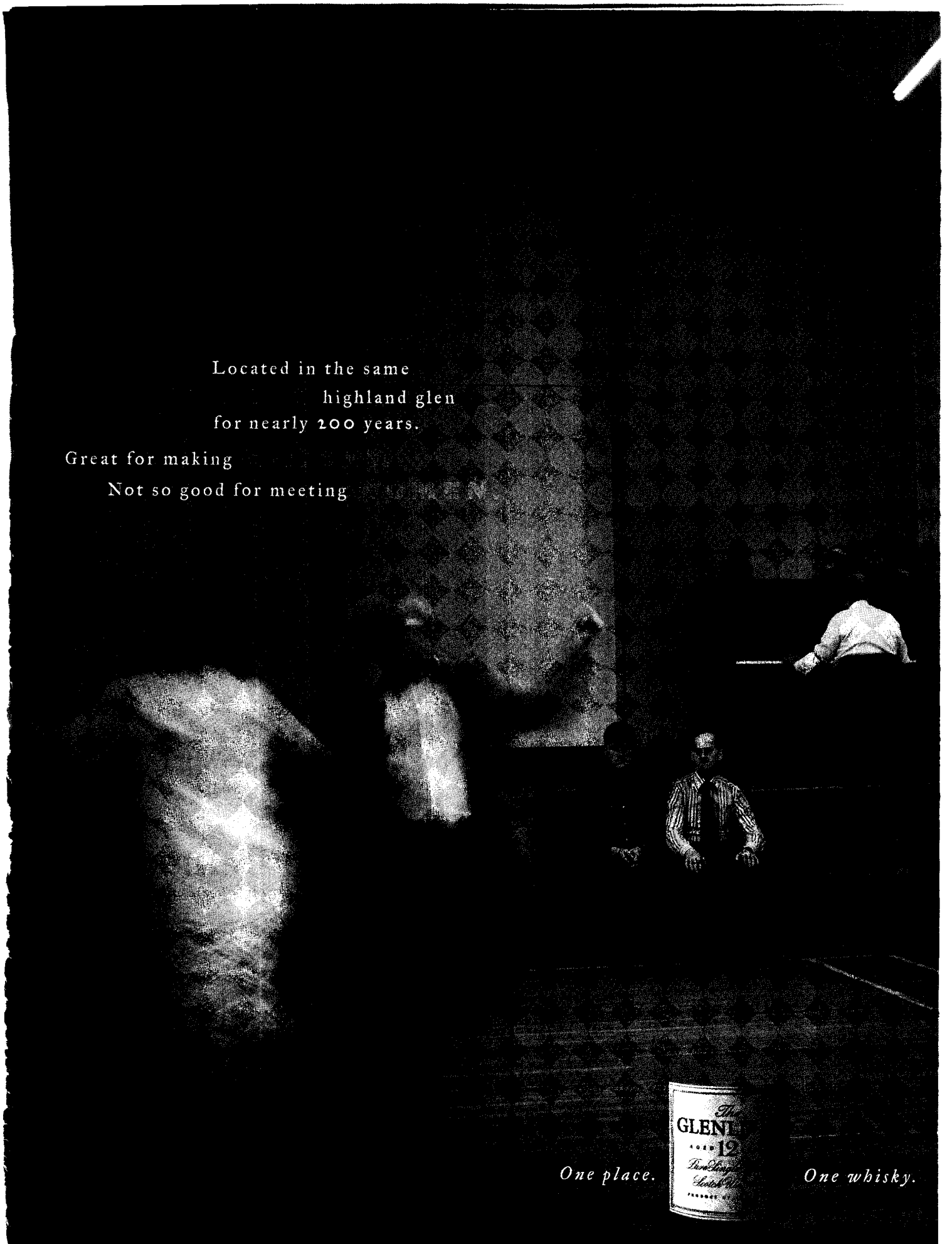

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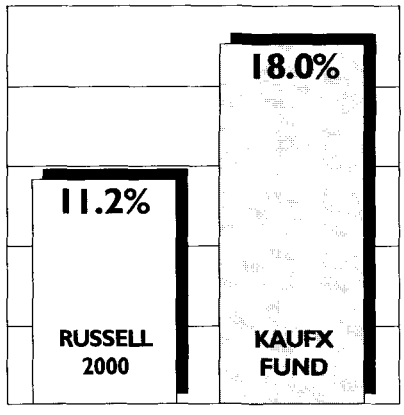

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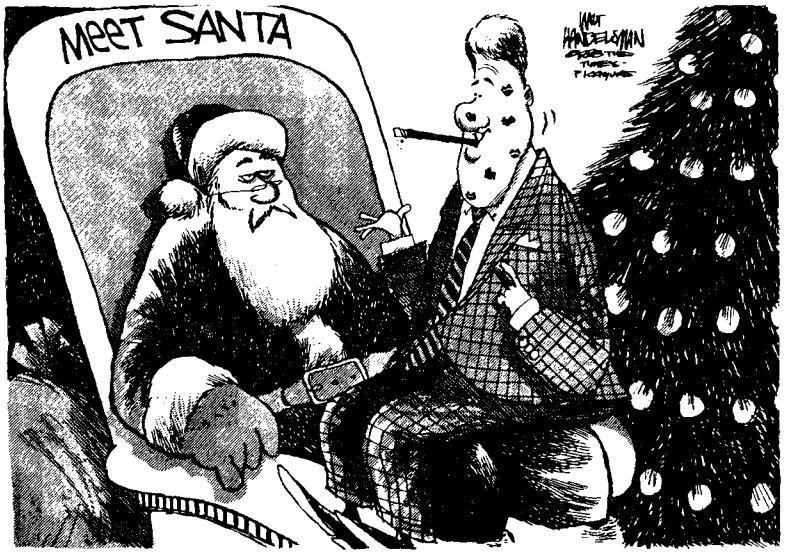
■ Among the oddest bits of flotsam during the Week of the Judiciary Committee was the fetishistic refusal of the President and his supporters to call his behavior "perjury." Maybe, they sometimes seemed to be saying, it was only lying under oath. Maybe if he actually thought he was telling the truth—or claimed he thought he was—then his lies weren't really lies. Did they put themselves and us through these contortions out of a genuine fear of a perjury prosecution after Mr. Clinton leaves office? Come on. If he escaped now with a censure, the consequence of a confession on his part . . .well, would even Inspector Javert pursue him into the new millennium? His stubbornness has a deeper source. For Mr. Clinton to admit perjury would be to admit to himself that there are some situations he cannot talk his way out of. And that would truly be an unacceptable admission.

■ House Majority Whip Tom DeLay "is addicted to the thuggish tactics of the Gingrich era," according to the *New York Times*. He "is playing a devious game." His offense? Continuing to advocate impeachment and oppose censure—which is to say, sticking to the position the *New York Times* itself took until November 20. As Dan Seligman pointed out in the *New York Post*, until that day, the *Times* was insisting that Clinton would have to admit that he lied under oath before censure could be considered an adequate substitute for impeachment. Absent a guilty plea, the paper said, "we are prepared to see the impeachment process through to a resolution." But the 11/20 editorial suddenly proclaimed that censure was "the correct remedy unless new evidence emerges." Over night, Clinton's "misconduct," which had previously been held to endanger "the rule of law," needed to be placed in perspective (it "did not occur in the context of national security or the misuse of key agencies"). Back on September 20, we were told that impeachment "need not traumatize the nation"; but now Clinton's ouster would be a "trauma" the nation should be spared. Judging from the *Times*'s fulminations against Mr. DeLay—he is also accused of "blustering" and speaking "pure hogwash"—the very thought of impeachment, beginning two months after the summer equinox, has certainly been traumatic for its editorialist.



■ Another of the Clinton Administration's ethical basketcases is off the hook. Former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy was acquitted by a Washington jury of accepting illegal gratuities (sports tickets, airplane rides for girlfriends, and the like) from companies currying favor with the department he controlled. Mr. Espy's lawyers—in depressingly familiar fashion—evoked race in appealing for their client's acquittal. The verdict was hailed as yet another blow to the independent-counsel statute, triggered during the Clinton years no fewer than seven times (and counting). This magazine has long been a foe of that statute, but we acknowledge that this particular Administration has been devilishly hard to police by conventional monitors. And then if Mr. Espy had been an upwardbound fat-cat Republican appointee hopping that same gravy train, general media treatment of him would have been . . . harsher?

■ For the second time in five years, Puerto Rican voters brushed back an effort to pursue statehood for their island. Statehood supporters outspent their opponents by at least 5 to 1 in the December 13 plebiscite, yet they could not muster more than 46.5 per cent of the electorate to go along. Puerto Rico's pro-statehood government nevertheless declared a victory. "I will inform Congress and the President of the United States that among four options statehood surpassed 90 per cent of support by those who want a change for Puerto Rico," said Gov. Pedro Rosselló. Uh huh. Another way of saying it is: a majority of voters, in an election with a turnout of 71 per cent, picked a fifth option—for continued commonwealth status. How would the people of the 50 states vote, *Are you in favor of the annexation of Puerto Rico?* Interesting idea.

■ Since the start of November, federal courts have struck down bans on partial-birth abortion in four states: Wisconsin, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Florida. Fourteen other states, struggling to mitigate excesses in procedures never even contemplated in *Roe* v. *Wade*, had already been rebuffed in court. The bans were designed to prohibit those abortions in which the fetus is partially delivered, the base of his skull ruptured with scissors, and the brains vacuumed out. The courts see nothing outré in this. In the Wisconsin case, libertarian eminence and Reagan appointee Judge Richard Posner allowed that "partial-birth abortion is a gruesome procedure," but no more gruesome, really, than "forms

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of cosmetic surgery." And the proposed laws are, in the courts' opinion, too vague: they might be interpreted to ban abortions in which the whole fetus, including the brain, is vacuumed out. That would constitute an "undue burden" on the right to abortion, which the Supreme Court in *Casey* (1992) forbade. This is an odd line of reasoning, not least because *Casey* was advertised at the time as granting legislatures more power to regulate abortion than they enjoyed after *Roe* v. *Wade*, and *Roe* had left Texas's ban on partial-birth abortion untouched. As Justice Felix Frankfurter remarked, in law a principle unfolds to the limits of its logic—even when those limits include infanticide.

■ The Administration has tipped its hand on how to proceed with its war against freer education. It seems likely that the White House will nominate Bill Lann Lee—for the third time—to head the Justice Department's civil-rights division in January. The first two times, Republican Senators refused to confirm Lee, who in his capacity as acting assistant attorney general for civil rights had built up a long record of support for some of the most onerous racial-preference policies around the country. The most recent abuse came on November 6, when one of Lee's henchmen (Thomas E. Perez, a deputy assistant attorney general) sent a letter to a South Carolina school district warning that plans to create several charter schools violated a desegregation court order. It's a specious argument, because students are not assigned to charter schools, parents choose them. If the number of private-school choice programs continues to grow, expect a full-frontal assault from a Justice Department using such tactics. The Senate can of course do what it can to derail Lee, by refusing yet again to confirm him. It should do its part, once more, to make sure Lee doesn't lead the anti-choice charge.

■ Sen. Robert Kerrey (D., Neb.) decided not to run for president in 2000, and it was probably a smart move. Only two sitting vice presidents in U.S. history have been denied their party's open presidential nomination, and Al Gore is not likely to follow in the footsteps of John Breckenridge and Alben Barkley. Kerrey may also be too conservative for Democratic primary voters, especially on Social Security. If he midwifes a deal to open that program to private investment options, however, he will have provided more leadership than many a president.

■ President Clinton's visit to Israel and Gaza was freighted with symbolism, not all of it positive. He visited Palestinian-controlled territory, with a red-carpeted greeting and a ribbon-cutting opening of Gaza's new international airport. The appearance was of a U.S. president acknowledging the statehood of a Palestinian entity whose final status, however, is according to protocols still to be negotiated with Israel. What Clinton got in return, in behalf of Israel and Peacemaker U.S.A., was something that had been promised three times before—a formal vote by the Palestine National Council to renounce that part of the PLO Charter that called for Israel's destruction. Meanwhile, Israel accuses the Palestinians of noncompliance with other key provisions of the Wye accord. The tension between Clinton and Netanyahu was easy to spot, and profound in its implications.

The Workshop Scab

When other gnomes would call in sick,
Al Gore kept digging with his pick.
He brushed when gee-gaws needed paint,
And when the Mrs. acted faint
From bimbos in the powder room,
He shut up tight as King Tut's tomb.
So if her hubby is for you,
Al Gore's your guy—and Tipper, too.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ Brit HomeSec Jack Straw surprised nobody when he declined to permit General Pinochet to go back to Chile. So now what happens is Pinochet and his lawyers will fight extradition, and this may take months, even years, to straighten out, given the ambiguity and irregularity of the legal obiter dicta that brought on Pinochet's detention in London, ostensibly for the crime of heading a government that tortured and killed dissenters; more plausibly, for heading up a counterrevolution against the revolutionary advances of the Allende pro-Communist government. The most piquant reaction came from Fidel Castro, whom one would have expected to praise the detention of the man who deposed his protégé Allende. Not at all. Castro expressed concern over the "extraterritorial" assault on Pinochet (you next, Fidel?) and added a contemptuous comment about how shoddily imperialism treats its allies.

■ The general miseries of life in Cuba continue, notwithstanding the optimism brought on by the Pope's visit in January. But there are the little things, and some less than little, like Christmas. For the first time since 1969, Christmas can be publicly observed. The decree announcing this was ever-so-careful to advise the Cubans that the reason for outlawing Christmas back then had nothing to do with the persecution of religion. It had been, rather, a felt need for economic austerity brought on by the faltering of sugar-harvest crops, *¿entiende Ud.?* But the observation of Christmas is not insignificant. It has the effect of recalling to observers the roots of Castroist practices, routine among the rulers of Judæa. And Christmas brings to mind ultimate perspectives, which have nothing whatever to do with the lingering Marxist superstitions of the Maximum Leader, Fidel.

■ Tom Wolfe's *A Man in Full* caught the reviewing eyes of

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Female Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 120	$ 135	$ 165	$ 235	$ 235
40	$ 153	$ 188	$ 200	$ 298	$ 300
45	$ 200	$ 210	$ 265	$ 400	$ 415
50	$ 260	$ 313	$ 400	$ 578	$ 608
55	$ 385	$ 440	$ 600	$ 956	$ 1,065
60	$ 535	$ 690	$ 865	$ 3,140	$ 3,140
65	$ 883	$ 1,015	$ 1,733	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
70	$1,430	$ 1,637	$ 3,035	$ 5,270	$ 7,220
75	$2,797	$ 4,770	$ 6,560	$10,370	$10,370

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 138	$ 163	$ 198	$ 280	$ 300
40	$ 185	$ 210	$ 260	$ 385	$ 383
45	$ 260	$ 335	$ 395	$ 548	$ 585
50	$ 378	$ 500	$ 600	$ 863	$ 915
55	$ 568	$ 758	$ 865	$ 1,805	$ 2,810
60	$ 908	$ 1,130	$ 1,365	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
65	$1,530	$ 1,845	$ 2,923	$ 5,270	$ 5,270
70	$2,665	$ 3,539	$ 5,405	$ 7,370	$10,070
75	$4,415	$ 7,848	$ 9,650	$13,640	$13,640

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Santa Always Knows

He knows when Clinton's sleeping;
He knows when he's awake.
God knows he heard the Mrs. scream,
"Be good for goodness sake!"
Now big-hair bimbo babes will be
Indexed in Bill's biography.

—W. H. von Dreele

John Updike and Norman Mailer, and their reservations were grandiose, and a little catty. "Entertainment, not literature, even literature in a modest aspirant form" (Updike). "Is one encountering a major novel or a major best seller?" (Mailer). All of which prompted Mr. Wolfe, no stranger to the display rituals of alpha males, to observe that, on the other hand, his critics' recent books have "been sinking without a bubble." Surely there is some envy chez Updike and Mailer, even as there is a glimmer of as-long-as-they-spell-the-name-right noisemaking in Wolfe's response. A sideshow of this fracas is the ignominious failure of the American Academy of Arts and Letters to elect Wolfe as a member—if not as a novelist, then, okay, as a journalist. Russell Baker and Art Buchwald are members, and Wolfe's reporting on a host of subjects, from Ken Kesey to John Glenn, surely stands with theirs—or anyone else's. Besides, once he's elected, he, Updike, and Mailer can argue face to face.

■ This month marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. In the Soviet bloc, it was the season of Brezhnev triumphant. In the West, it was the season of détente. In the Gulag, it was the season of despair. Yet, as Dante showed, even Hell can be chronicled; and in a work of heroic research, in conditions where truth-telling could mean death, Solzhenitsyn collected testimony, mostly of torment, but also of endurance and even occasional resistance. Without Dante's art, he spoke with the authority of fact, and of his own experience as a former Gulag inmate. *The Gulag Archipelago* triggered a moral and political revival in both the Communist and the free worlds, vindicating the evergreen prophecy, two decades earlier, of the otherwise docile Soviet hack Ilya Ehrenburg on the publication of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*: even if the world is covered in concrete, one day a crack will appear, and through that crack, grass will grow.

■ Recent reports that boys in school do more poorly than girls have caused a strange thing to happen: now people pick one sex, as if betting on a team, and then proceed to tout this sex as the most victimized. Those on one side point out that girls are more likely a) to suffer from eating disorders, b) to be harassed, and c) to harbor a distorted image of themselves. Those on the other side point out that boys are more likely a) to be held back a grade, b) to have disciplinary problems, and c) to drop out of school. Those on the girls' side counter that it doesn't matter whether boys drop out because they aren't discriminated against in the workplace. Since boys win jobs over more qualified sisters, in this view, other problems boys may have don't really matter. Conservatives and feminists are silly to bicker over which sex is the more victimized. Ranking who has it worse uses up time better given over to more time at home, helping to guide both sexes of children into and through adolescence.

■ It's Christmastime again, and the fundamentalist-ascetics are peddling their own products, as usual. *Simple Abundance*, the 1995 bestseller, has sold more than 3 million copies. Its author (Sarah Breathnach) needs six personal assistants to help her about in her big Washington townhouse. Others are cashing in on our austerity: Jeff Stone and Kim Johnson Gross have sold over 1 million copies of their *Chic Simple* consumer guides. Bill McKibben, the environmentalist who argued in *Maybe One* that, because of global warming and overpopulation, mothers should have only one child, has written *Hundred Dollar Holiday: The Case for a More Joyful Christmas*. He advocates carving walking sticks for your family instead of buying them presents. And if you are going to buy presents, shop locally. But what's the matter with just letting the Christian spirit manifest itself in the shops also? Provided the main story of Christmas is not lost sight of.

■ A recent *Washington Post* reports that the Marine Corps Uniform Board is considering the addition of bloodstripes to female officers' skirts. (Currently, only men's uniforms display the legendary red stripes down the sides of the uniform, a historical tribute to the Marines who died during the storming of the castle at Chapultepec during the Mexican war in 1847). To stand against the charge of authoritarianism, the Marine board is commissioning "wear-testers" to try out the proposed uniform, to see what the Marine guys think about the stripes. "We've gone to chow halls, gyms, the exchange, and asked people what they think," explained Major Caroline Fermin-Knuth. "Marines love to give their opinion." These impromptu fashion shows have provoked much response: some think the stripes are "snazzy," others suggest that the board doesn't "understand" fashion. Many of the wear-testers are concerned that stripes on skirts "don't always accentuate the positive." But do they eliminate the negative?

■ *Dear Socks, Dear Buddy*, the "book" Mrs. Clinton wrote, is reportedly not selling well. But if Socks and Buddy ever write an exposé of what goes on at home, it will hit the bestseller list the same day.

■ Sophisticated New Yorkers are clamoring for tickets to *The Blue Room* on Broadway in the hope of seeing Nicole

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Kidman bare-nekkid for a full 14 seconds. Meanwhile, TV's most critically acclaimed dramatic series, *NYPD Blue*, continues its practice of welcoming new stars to the show by asking them to bare their buttocks onscreen. (Rick "Don't Call Me Ricky Anymore" Schroeder was the latest inductee.) Next: a Whitney Biennial devoted to the theme "Invisible in the Girls' Locker Room: Postmodern Visions."

■ Schools around the country are banning peanut butter from their lunch menus, following reports of a few allergic reactions. What astonishes is the time that has gone by without official reaction to the molestation of peanut butter stuck to the mouth. There is even a word for this blight, not often used, but nonetheless useful to remind us of the horror of it. *Arachibutyrophobia*, they call it.

■ The eternally progressive editors of *The Nation* returned tanned and rested from their first annual fundraising cruise, a week-long tour of the Caribbean aboard the same luxury liner used by—gulp—*NR*. Our spies tell us that while the bar on board served plenty of Stolichnaya martinis, there were, alas, no Cuba Libres. Shuffleboard on the Trotsky Deck, anyone?

EUROPE

Blair at Play

INSTABILITY in Eastern Europe today is a commonplace, but the new instability of fundamental arrangements in *Western* Europe is not widely remarked upon. British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a surprise announcement in October at a European Union summit in Austria. He said that Britain would work with its EU partners to strengthen European defense cooperation, which sounds a little dissociative. Blair reassures Americans that it's all within the NATO framework, but when he and Jacques Chirac met in St-Malo in early December they used a more-than-ambiguous formulation, with talk about how it's time for Europe to be more independent of the United States. And of course we have Europe's great adventure in monetary union (commencing January 1), accompanied by a complementary assertiveness in foreign and defense policies.

The potential gulf between Europe and the United States is only magnified by the new "red-green" coalition in Germany that tilts the whole continent leftward. The flower-child Germans have pushed NATO to abandon its nuclear-deterrence doctrine and to require UN Security Council permission for military action outside NATO territory.

This proved too much even for the Clinton Administration. If there is any consolation for us, it is that the Anglo-French rapprochement is partly owing to fear of the more free-wheeling Germans. The need is to stress the continued indispensability of an American role in European security. Without the U.S. military presence, even Western Europe could become unhinged. The Clinton Administration's leadership in Europe is hampered by its discordant blend of moralistic hectoring and strategic fecklessness. As the Alliance's 50th anniversary approaches next April, centrifugal forces seem to be gaining ground.

High Jinks Down Under

In Sydney, where Madame Tussaud's
Has Clinton on display,
The patrons pull his zipper down;
And though on Christmas Day
His waxy effigy will get
A decent respite, when
The crowds return on Monday, it's
Unzipping time again.

—W. H. von Dreele

RELIGION (AND POLITICS)

St. Bill

FROM the moment the Monica storm hit, President Clinton has had an unstinting and most public ally: the Rev. J. Philip Wogaman, pastor of the Methodist church in Washington, D.C., at which the President can be seen most Sundays displaying his Bible for the television cameras. All through the scandal, Rev. Wogaman has not been shy about blasting Kenneth Starr on places like *Nightline*, though always willing to vouch for the integrity of the presidential soul. Now he is about to publish a book—*From the Eye of the Storm: A Pastor to the President Speaks Out*—in which he will condemn the Starr investigation but also probe the national vulnerabilities that made the current predicament possible. After telling the *Los Angeles Times*, "I don't want to speculate much on Monica Lewinsky," he went on to speculate that "some aspects [of her conduct] are pretty familiar in American life . . . where celebrities are involved." Ah, the stalker theory! This is exactly what the President told Sidney Blumenthal—that a seigneur is helpless before the wily advances of a comely volunteer. The President apparently peddled this same story to his pastor.

Rev. Wogaman also noted in his *Times* interview that both the President and his intern had had a rough time of it in childhood—he with his abusive stepfather, she with her weight problem and divorced parents. The President has used this one before. He told the First Lady that he had merely been "ministering" to a troubled young subordinate who had a background similar to his, a line Mrs. Clinton passed on to others,

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who, in turn, shared it with Mr. Starr's grand jury. Finally, Rev. Wogaman urged America to forgive the President rather than "heap the sins of the nation on him." Maybe Bill Clinton should be canonized! The President as the Lamb, suffering and sacrificing for the benefit of us all.

THE POLLARD CASE

Free Him? Or Hang Him?

PRIME Minister Bibi thought he had gotten a promise from President Bill at the Wye talks to release jailed super-spy Jonathan Pollard, who sent U.S. secrets to Israel. Clinton wiggled out of that promise, if that's what it was. But he did order a "review" of the case, with a deadline of early 1999. The U.S. national-security establishment is adamantly opposed to Pollard's release. And the plot thickens, because there is the matter of the trunkload of highly sensitive revelations—of U.S. intelligence codes, sources, and methods—but now also a question of the adequacy of Israeli security in husbanding the pirated information. If betrayal isn't treated gravely, the offense is trivialized, and vibrations of unconcern contaminate the security culture. Senator Moynihan is most certainly correct in his book (*Secrecy*) that much too much material gets classified than need be. But no one is doubting the gravity of the Pollard spycatch. And prison sentences shouldn't be reflections of the longevity of a secret's usefulness. If the security code you stole in June gets changed in July, that doesn't mean a 30-day sentence is appropriate. The appropriate punishment for the betrayal that can mean life and death is execution. We were spared decades' demonstrations to free Julius Rosenberg. The director of the Central Intelligence Agency threatened to resign in November when word got out that President Clinton was thinking of releasing Pollard as a favor to Netanyahu. Congress should give time to an appropriate way to signal to Mr. Clinton that we do not free traitors who have endangered national security and have been instrumental, in many cases, in the detection and execution of friends of the United States.

IMPEACHMENT

Moderating Full Time

ALFONSE D'Amato has at last garnered some good press, however late for his re-election campaign as Senator. D'Amato came out against impeachment, earning him the plaudits not only of big-media types but of the President himself, who phoned D'Amato personally to express his thanks. D'Amato took his stand in part because Rep. Peter King, a fellow New York Republican also opposing impeachment, asked him to do so. "I made it real personal," King explained to a Washington audience. "I told him I was getting killed, a thousand calls a day, and I needed a favor from him."

While he is in the business of thanking people, Mr. Clinton may wish to send notes to virtually the entire New York Republican Party. Governor Pataki and Mayor Giuliani too have spoken against impeachment, and as of the third week in December, three of the five Republican House members on record as against impeachment were from New York (with Rep. King as their ringleader—his own expression of gratitude we are told, for the President's efforts in Northern Ireland, in which the Congressman played a part).

Not every Republican campaigning against impeachment is from New York, of course; some are from Massachusetts. There is Elliott Richardson—Old Reliable for the Democrats—trading on the prestige he earned in refusing President Nixon's order to discharge Archibald Cox. And there is Bill Weld, the ex-governor of Massachusetts and President Clinton's failed nominee for ambassador to Mexico, who took his pro-censure, anti-impeachment act before the Judiciary Committee. There are arguments to be made against impeachment, naturally, and these Republicans made a few. But given the GOP constituency in their parts of the world, those who suspect they are temporizing are, well, probably correct.

CULTURE WATCH

Looking Out, and Up

SOMETHING is stirring. We seem to be in for a spell of . . . (neo?) patriotism. American history in the universities today is generally treated as a serial drama orchestrated by anti-heroes. But outside that bunker take note of the following: Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* deliberately abandoned John Wayne romanticism about war and gave us the reality of battle. The final emotion it left us with was how grateful we should be to those who fought that necessary war. The forthcoming *Thin Red Line* will remind us what it took to win on Guadalcanal. In preparation is a 13-part HBO mini-series based on Stephen Ambrose's book *Band of Brothers*, about a group of World War II paratroopers. Mr. Ambrose, the biographer of Eisenhower, has brought out an apparently unending stream of books, all first rate, about World War II. His latest, *Citizen Soliders* (Normandy to the Rhine) and *The Victors* (essays readjusting military judgments), are bestsellers. Peter Jennings has produced a coffee-table book celebrating *The Century*, specializing in those who came before Mark Rudd, Kevorkian, and Clinton; and Tom Brokaw has written a book hailing those who kept their nerve despite the Depression and Omaha Beach. This one is called *The Greatest Generation*. Listen! *Even Columbus may make a comeback*. Common sense is breaking in. A couple of generations of academic historians lost their balance over Vietnam. They hadn't noticed that it was but one lost battle in a long war that is being won.

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Q: What Must the Church Do For Liberals to Love Her?

A: Become the Whore of Babylon

Liberalism is supposed to be synonymous with open-mindedness, yet most liberals continue to be deeply bigoted against Catholicism. According to Bill Donohue, whose Catholic League vanquished Disney's Catholic-trashing TV show *Nothing Sacred*, anti-Catholicism is "the last respectable bias." Liberal opinion has long regarded the Catholic Church as something like the Whore of Babylon. But nowadays liberals feel compassion for whores, would love to see prostitution legalized and whores unionized from sea to shining sea, with the Department of Health and Human Services running the whorehouses.

So there's a little problem: How can liberals continue to hate the Church when they themselves embrace whoredom — indeed, would love to make every woman a whore?

Consider the rest of the liberal utopia: raunchy sex ed, titillating TV shows and movies, free condoms for every teenager, free abortions in case the condoms fail, full rights and benefits for shack-ups, same-sex "marriage" (helps devalue the currency of real marriage, you know), and adultery a matter of privacy not character. So yes, the liberal vision is: Every gal a slut.

So it won't do to lambaste the Church for being a whore. Therefore the Church is now castigated for being a prude — the Prude of Peoria, shall we say. Indeed, liberals today could only love the Church if she did in fact become the Whore of Babylon.

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■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Beginning with this issue, Jay Nordlinger takes over as Managing Editor, replacing the irreplaceable Linda Bridges, who turns out to be no more irreplaceable than George Washington (Linda has been promoted and will serve as Senior Editor). Jay N. comes to us from *The Weekly Standard*, where he was an editor, reporter, and critic. Mr. Nordlinger is a native of Ann Arbor and went to school at the University of Michigan and Harvard. His wife Pia also worked for *The Weekly Standard* and now is an editorial writer for the *New York Post*.

—WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: In your column of Oct. 13, reprinted in the Nov. 23 issue of NR, you report that President Clinton was seen leaving church, "prayer book in hand." This is probably the hundredth letter pointing out that what the President carries to and from church is his personal copy of the Bible, not a "prayer book." As a Southern Baptist, Mr. Clinton would eschew such a papist device, even while attending a Methodist church. Southern Baptists may forgive sexual misbehavior, but not written prayers!

Sincerely,
William Muehl
Tucson, Ariz.

Dear Mr. Muehl: Yours isn't the one-hundredth letter on the subject, so a special thanks for the correction. But recall, a prayer book is not a "papist device." The most famous prayer book was done by fiercely anti-papist scholars in the 17th century, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: On 11/24/97 I received a letter from you, with your signature no less, addressing me as a friend of NR. To refresh your memory (superb as it may be), you were "forlorn" by my failure to renew. You proceeded to write, "The editors even considered mass suicide as a gesture." I was much moved by your eloquent plea and did indeed extend my subscription. I added the following suggestion in response to the editors' considering mass suicide: "Perhaps one or two of them as a token of your sincerity (this would also make room for some new blood)." Since I have not heard from you on this matter, I assume your editors are still hale and hearty. Long may they live.

On another note, I would like to make a suggestion regarding *Firing Line*. As much as I enjoy your thoughtful discourse with your guests, I believe you could add some additional flavor if you were to occasionally have Florence King (the self-proclaimed Misanthrope) as a worthy opponent.

Sincerely,
H. B. Jandewerth
Eagan, Minn.

Dear Mr. Jandewerth: Delighted you are with us. The last word from the associate editor before his defenestration was, "Tell Jandewerth I did it for him!" Re King, I'd be afraid to have her on my program. I might accidentally disagree with her.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: It is apparent to me that the President has an ulterior motive in his otherwise quixotic attempt to create and extend legal privileges (protective function, executive, etc.). He must be laying the groundwork to allow him to assert *droit du seigneur*.

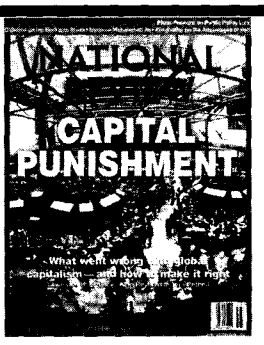
Sincerely,
Bob Cousins
Saratoga, Calif.

Dear Mr. Cousins: You call that laying the groundwork? Great heavens. What would he do after that?

Cordially, WFB

■ To: WFB
From: Ed Capano
Bill, have a look at the attached! Put out the champagne!

—WFB



Biweeklies

November 9, 1998

Inclusion of the March launch of *ESPN The Magazine*—for which no 1997 comparisons exist—boosted 1998 year-to-date ad pages by 15.36 percent; without it, the sector posted 8,662.26 ad pages, a more down-to-earth 3.8 percent clip. Newest addition to biweekly club is William F. Buckley Jr.'s NATIONAL REVIEW. NR has a new energy infusion and redesign from 30-year-old rookie editor Rich Lowry.—JM

BUSINESS/INTERTAINMENT	Issue Date	Current Pages	Issue Date Last Yr.	Pages Last Yr.	Percent Change	YTD Pages	YTD Last Year	Percent Change
ESPN, The Magazine	2-Nov	77.5	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	964.91	N.A.	N.A.
Forbes,	2-Nov	237.59	3-Nov	247.15	-3.87%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Forbes (Buyers Guide)#	2-Nov	23.02	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Forbes (Total)		260.61		247.15	5.45%	3829.89	3880.63	-1.31%
Fortune[E]	9-Nov	175.92	10-Nov	214.89	-18.13%	3151.58	2911.34	8.25%
National Review	9-Nov	29.33	10-Nov	16.91	73.45%	477.74	357.43	33.66%
Rolling Stone##	12-Nov	81.23	13-Nov	149.2	-45.56%	1680.79	1553.3	8.21%
Total		**624.59**		**628.15**	**-0.57%**	**9627.17**	**8345.27**	**15.36%**

 # = NO BUYERS GUIDE IN 1997. ## = RS PUBLISHED DOUBLE ISSUE ON 11/13/97.

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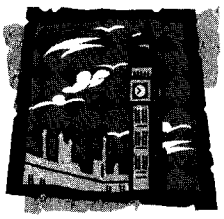
NATIONAL REVIEW 1999 BALTIC CRUISE

London, Berlin, Oslo, Helsinki, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, Tallin, Bornholm, Århus, & Copenhagen. Sailing aboard Holland America Line's Spectacular* MS ROTTERDAM VI *July 18-30, 1999

1999. Has it already been ten years since the Berlin Wall fell? Has a decade passed since the Iron Curtain began to disintegrate?



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To mark the historic 10th anniversary of one of the greatest episodes of the 20th century, your favorite conservative magazine—the very journal that was at the forefront of the fight against Soviet totalitarianism—is proud to announce a special event: the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***.

Joining **Bill Buckley** and *NR* editors **Rich Lowry**, **John O'Sullivan**, **Kate O'Beirne**, and **Peter Rodman** aboard Holland America Line's luxurious flagship, the MS *Rotterdam VI*, for this once-in-a-lifetime affair will be some of the biggest names of the battle against Communism, including former Defense Secretary **Caspar Weinberger**, former Secretary of State **Alexander Haig**, former White House National Security chiefs **William Clark** and **Richard Allen**, former Senator **Sam Nunn**, former Attorney General **Edwin Meese**, General **Vernon Walters** (former UN Ambassador, CIA nabob, and Ambassador to West Germany when the Wall a-tumbled!), and former Senator **James Buckley**, who ran Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for the Gipper, (and who's also the brother of you-know-who!). The ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be your once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet the key players and tacticians who fought and triumphed in the epic battle to topple Soviet totalitarianism.

Through seven seminar sessions, numerous social events, and 12 nights of fine dining (when you'll be enjoying intimate meals with our special guests), the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will provide you with a special, unique opportunity to hear the inside story on how some great men and women worked together to pull off the greatest feat of modern times: restoring freedom to hundreds of millions of oppressed people.

Imagine yourself discussing the roll-back of the Soviet threat with **Caspar Weinberger**. Or finding out from **William Clark** and **Vernon Walters** how Ronald Reagan forged an alliance with the Vatican to keep Poland's Solidarity movement alive. Or learning from **Ed Meese** the inside-the-Oval Office details of how the Gipper battled the Evil Empire. Or asking **Al Haig** how he coordinated anti-Soviet policies with America's allies. Or finding out from **Sam Nunn** the key support this fight received from Democrats (well, some Democrats). Or hearing from **Jim Buckley** how an embattled American radio outfit kept hope alive for millions

NR'S GIFTS: FREE LUXURY BERLIN EXCURSION ...

July 22, 1999, will be a great day for *NR* cruisers. Early that morning the *Rotterdam VI* will dock in Warnermünde, Germany, where we'll hop on a luxury train for a trip through the lush countryside. Our destination: Berlin. There, air-conditioned motor coaches will take us from one historic landmark to another, including, of course, the remains of the infamous Wall. From dawn till dusk, you'll enjoy great sights, food, drinks, and companionship. This special bells-and-whistles excursion costs $400 per person. But it's yours, FREE, as *National Review*'s "thank you" for joining us on this once-in-a-lifetime trip!

... PLUS *NR* WILL PAY FOR ALL THE "EXTRAS"!

Port fees, taxes, transfers, gratuities—those "incidental" costs add up. For the Baltic cruise, they will run roughly $425.00 per person. But as yet another way of saying "thanks," *NR* is picking up this. All told, the Berlin tour plus the "incidentals" is a whopping $825.00 per person value, at no cost to you. How can you say "No" to that?!

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ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERLIN WALL'S FALL WITH

of Europeans. Or reliving with **Bill Buckley** his hand-to-hand fighting in the public arena with America's apologist Left.

All of this can, and will, happen on the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***. The question is, will you be there?

We hope so. On top of all the discussion of great events, on top of the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall, the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be a phenomenal travel extravaganza that will bring you face to face with northern Europe's most historic cities and most beautiful sights.

The "Voyage of the Vikings and Czars," as Holland America has dubbed the cruise, is one of the most sought-after vacations, and for good reason: the sights are so stunning, the ports so beautiful, and the "season" so short that most 1999 Baltic cruises are already sold out!

But don't fret: *NR* has a lock on 225 cabins (over 60 are *already* gone!) for this special July voyage—but only for a limited time, so you must act quickly. Here's our schedule:The floating paradise for this special journey is the *Rotterdam VI*, Holland America's new

flagship (everything is in mint condition, and one step above top notch). On board this impeccable vessel you will find every-thing—pools, shops, and lounges galore, plus a casino, java bar, library and puzzle room, spa (with sauna, masseuse, and steam bath), beauty salon, movie theater, tennis courts, running track, and so much more. Whether it's day or night, the *Rotterdam VI* offers you endless entertainment and activities. And as for the sumptuous cuisine, well, it can be summed up in one delicious word: *wunderbar*!

FANTASTIC EUROPEAN ITINERARY

LONDON is the departure point for the *Rotterdam VI*, which will visit:
OSLO, Norway's cosmopolitan capital and the citadel of all things Viking;
ÅRHUS, Denmark's charming port and pit-stop to visit numerous sights, including Hans Christian Andersen's birthplace;
WARNERMÜNDE/BERLIN, where you can take our special tour to visit the historic sights (Checkpoint Charlie, the Wall Museum, the Brandenburg Gate, and so much more) of Germany's capital;
BORNHOLM, the popular Danish island famous for its glass, ceramics, and herring!;
STOCKHOLM, Sweden's capital, home to such glorious waterways that it's called the "Venice of the North";
HELSINKI, Finland's stunning capital, renowned for its gleaming art and shopping districts, your gateway to Lapland;
ST. PETERSBURG, the ancient home to the Czars where you'll find the Hermitage, the Winter Palace, and the spectacular Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul;
MUUGA/TALLIN, Estonia's capital and a tourist's paradise—museums abound in the most "intact" medieval city in Northern Europe; and
COPENHAGEN, the final port for this fantastic cruise, famous for its cobblestone streets and squares (why not stay an extra day or two in this walker's paradise?!).

Even better are the *Rotterdam*'s staterooms—they are elegant and large, and some feature incredible extras (there are many with big, private verandahs—but they're *going fast*!). And on the "Concierge Deck," where the *Rotterdam VI* sports 4 Penthouse Suites (each one some 1,126 square feet) and 36 Suites (565 square feet), there's the

exclusive "Neptune Lounge" (it features a library and a concierge office—with an officer dedicated to handling all your special requests!). No matter which type of cabin you reserve, or in which restaurant you dine, or of what amenities you take advantage, you'll be overwhelmed by Holland America Line's service, style, attentiveness, and grace.

Prices for the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***—your unique opportunity to enjoy a luxury vacation while celebrating the demise of the USSR with America's greatest Cold Warriors—start at only $4,999 per person. (*NR* prices are a big savings off Holland America's "catalogue" rates, plus *NR* is paying for the special Berlin excursion and port fees, taxes, gratuities, and transfers—a combined $825 per-person value!)

Join William F. Buckley Jr., Caspar Weinberger, Alexander Haig, William Clark, Richard Allen, Edwin Meese, James Buckley, Vernon Walters, John O'Sullivan, Rich Lowry, Sam Nunn, Kate O'Beirne, and Peter Rodman for the cruise of your life. Call today for your ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** Information Kit. It's **FREE**, and includes everything you'll need to know about this spectacular celebration. Call 1-800-548-2184 today, before the cabin of your choice is *gone*!

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■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Private Dreams

President Clinton privatize Social Security? Dream on.

JOHN J. MILLER

SAID President Clinton on December 8, as he kicked off a two-day White House conference on Social Security, "America faces no more important challenge than the need to save Social Security. Our ears and our minds must remain open to any good idea from any party or any person of goodwill." He didn't stick around to hear many of those ideas, however. He had to catch a plane to Tennessee, where he attended Albert Gore Sr.'s funeral.

The conventional wisdom in Washington holds that the climate has never been better for overhauling Social Security and replacing its phony trust fund with private retirement accounts controlled by individual workers. The midterm elections are over, impeachment proceedings are drawing to a close, and Clinton is thinking about his place in history books. He has indicated his willingness to consider market solutions to Social Security's looming insolvency. Different policy experts have found the President, in private conversation, completely familiar with how a system of retirement accounts would work. Of the choices concerning Social Security—cut benefits, raise taxes, or earn a better return on investments—privatization looks like a winner.

So perhaps the climate, indeed, has never been better—but it still isn't favorable enough. The politicians have a fourth option on Social Security, and they are pretty familiar with it: do nothing. And the central problem with the hope that genuine reform will come anytime soon is that it counts on Clinton to lead the way. He won't do it.

Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

The President's interest in Social Security reform has never been sincere. He adopted the phrase "save Social Security first" in last January's State of the Union address, not because he intended to follow through on his pledge, but because he wanted to freeze Republicans on the tax issue and prevent them from using the budget surplus to pay for cuts. Clinton appeared at several conferences around the country on Social Security, but never committed himself to any kind of plan. Instead, he uttered a series of feel-good platitudes ("Social Security is a sacred trust between the generations") no doubt tested by focus groups.

Then, in October, he abruptly decided that saving Social Security should not come first after all. He pressed Congress (which by then had abandoned tax cuts) to spend $20 billion of the surplus on "emergencies" such as dairy-farm subsidies and chewing-gum research.

At the early-December conference, Clinton nevertheless boasted of making good on a promise he hadn't kept: "Earlier this year, I said we should reserve any surplus until we save Social Security first. We have done so." That's a useful fiction for both parties; Republicans are in no position to call Clinton on it because so many of them went along with the budget deal. But the President's hypocrisy didn't stop there. He implored his listeners to restrain themselves in their debates: "We do not need to let our differences disintegrate into personal attacks." Those words might have been more welcome in September and October, when Clinton's labor allies were running negative ads against House Republicans who voted for an $80 billion tax cut by calling that vote an assault on Social Security.

The reformers like to point out that Clinton is desperately searching for a "legacy" (and preferably one that doesn't involve cigar tricks). "Everybody in the White House calls Social Security a big legacy item for him," says Ed Kilgore of the Democratic Leadership Council, which supports partial privatization. Yet Clinton pursues legacies the way he pursues women: He loves them and leaves them. Over the last six months, White House aides have pointed to a variety of Clinton legacy projects, ranging from the botched tobacco deal to the presidential race initiative. A *New York Times* story in October even remarked—with no irony whatsoever—that Administration officials "portray" technology exports to China and elsewhere "as one of Mr. Clinton's most lasting legacies" because they have bolstered America's national security.

The Republican takeover of Congress in 1994 taught Clinton a lesson that spells bad news for Social Security reform: If you offer a detailed leg-

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islative plan (as the President, with the First Lady, did on health care), you invite partisan attack. The GOP, of course, realizes this, too. Speaker-in-waiting Bob Livingston and others are insisting that Clinton make the

■

President Clinton pursues legacies the way he pursues women: He loves them and leaves them.

■

first move on reform; having been whacked before, they are wary of sticking their necks out. Yet they have made clear to the Administration that they are ready to do business on privatization.

Clinton obviously recognizes the risks to himself. If he puts forward a plan, he will make himself vulnerable not only to GOP sniping but to attacks from the left wing of his party. On December 3, a group of such Democrats—Patricia Ireland, Jesse Jackson, and John Sweeney among them—announced their staunch opposition to any kind of privatization. They represent a powerful constituency among Democrats and can honestly claim to have played a key role in keeping Clinton afloat during the Lewinsky scandal. And they will make certain to exact a political price. Two weeks before the House voted on articles of impeachment, Rep. Pete Stark of California told *National Journal*, "If Clinton voted to privatize Social Security, I would vote to impeach him."

Meanwhile, congressional Democrats led by Sen. Ted Kennedy and Rep. Earl Pomeroy are developing a proposal that would have the federal government invest Social Security funds collectively in the stock market rather than allow individuals to make their own decisions. This is a deal-killer for Republicans, and the Democrats know it. But by offering such a plan, Democrats think they can avoid being called obstructionists while still smothering privatization.

For all Clinton's rhetoric about Social Security, he has made only one commitment regarding reform: He will not support an increase in the payroll tax rate. Everything else is apparently on the table. After the President discussed Social Security with a group of congressmen on December 9, one who attended the meeting, the Republican Mark Sanford of South Carolina, said, "I got no sense that Clinton is for private accounts. It was the most indiscernible of all the tea leaves we were trying to read."

Supporters of privatization are right to believe they are winning the intellectual battle over Social Security reform. And, in the end, they will likely win the political one as well. But with Clinton reluctant to step out front and Republicans unable to trust him, Social Security reform is probably a good idea whose time has not yet come. **NR**

■ THE UNIONS ■

New Team

Will Hoffa the Son move labor to the center?

ARCH PUDDINGTON

THE day after he became president of the Teamsters, James P. Hoffa—son of the legendary Jimmy Hoffa—was asked on *Meet the Press* about his relations with the AFL-CIO leadership. His response could not have been reassuring to the federation's president, John J. Sweeney. Hoffa noted that the labor establishment had "interfered" in his first bid for the Teamsters presidency on behalf of the then-incumbent, Ron Carey. Under these circumstances, Hoffa said, relations would be "quite a challenge." He added that he planned to "stand up for the Teamsters" in the councils of labor.

Mr. Puddington is a vice president at Freedom House.

Hoffa can be pardoned for viewing the AFL-CIO's executive body as hostile. In 1996, he was defeated in his initial run for the Teamsters job by a razor-thin margin. A subsequent investigation by a federal monitor discovered that the Carey campaign had committed massive violations of the law. At the heart of the scandal was an elaborate scheme to launder campaign contributions through the Democratic National Committee, an assortment of liberal-left cause organizations, several large international unions, and the AFL-CIO itself. The unions most actively involved in the anti-Hoffa maneuvering—the Service Employees and the State, County, and Municipal Employees—were among John Sweeney's most loyal supporters. Furthermore, Rich Trumka, the AFL-CIO's number-two man, was accused of having participated in the money-laundering operation to the tune of $150,000. Trumka, in fact, has been under investigation for over a year. Further indictments may come soon.

Of course, neither the labor movement nor the Teamsters are strangers to scandal. Even so, trade-union leaders have regarded interference in the internal affairs of a rival union as an unpardonable breach of labor ethics. And while a number of unions have been plagued by official misconduct, the AFL-CIO under George Meany and Lane Kirkland was never so tainted.

The question now is whether Hoffa—driven by resentment and putative differences over labor policy—will take an oppositional stance towards the Sweeney leadership. Certainly his election changes labor's internal correlation of forces. Sweeney's margin of victory in his first campaign for the AFL-CIO presidency was quite narrow, and it was Ron Carey who tipped the scales in his favor. The Teamsters union is the largest AFL-CIO affiliate; its 1.4 million members make up about 10 per cent of the federation's total rank and file. Combine the Teamsters with the American Federation of Teachers (a 1-million-member union that opposed Sweeney in 1995), and you already have the beginnings of a potent opposition coalition.

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At this point, however, there is reason to doubt whether serious opposition over Sweeney's leadership will emerge. Although he made a number of very public gestures to the Left upon taking command at the AFL-CIO—for example, joining a socialist organization, endorsing multiculturalism and gay rights, and encouraging

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There is anger in labor over the alliances with the Left, a disgust that Hoffa shares.

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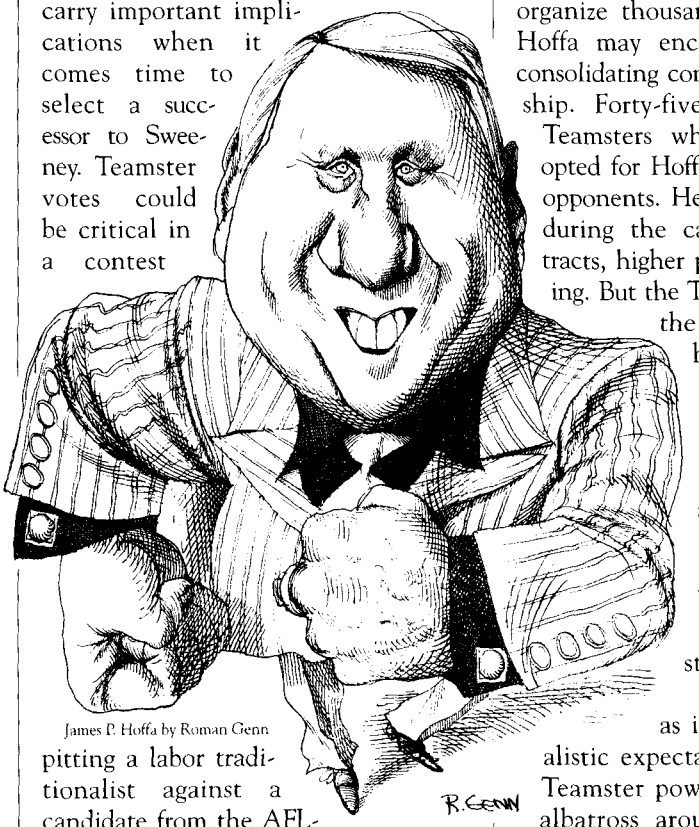
alliances with radical academics and students—Sweeney is at heart a pragmatic and skillful labor politician. He understands that the labor federation is not ideologically monolithic and that most labor leaders are more comfortable with Lyndon Johnson's brand of liberalism than with George McGovern's or Jesse Jackson's.

There is evidence that the astute Sweeney has been preparing for the Hoffa era by moving labor towards the center over the past year. Sweeney, of course, may also have been motivated by the Carey campaign scandal and the California referendum that would have placed restrictions on the use of union dues in political campaigns. Labor beat back the "payroll protection" measure after a bitter and costly campaign, but some believe that the close call in that election may have convinced the AFL-CIO to assume a less strident posture.

There are also signs that labor will use its considerable clout within the Democratic Party to prevent a bloody presidential-primary battle that might leave the winner crippled for the general election, à la Jimmy Carter after his 1980 battering by Ted Kennedy. Many unions are already said to be lining up behind the frontrunner, Al Gore, even though candidates with superior credentials on labor issues—such as Dick Gephardt, Paul Wellstone, and Jesse Jackson—may well enter the race. And while the AFL-CIO regards trade restriction as the number-one legislative priority, Sweeney has thus far refrained from joining Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader in a crusade against "globalism."

Among Hoffa's stated priorities are organizing the unorganized, arguing for protectionist legislation, and adopting a less one-sided political-endorsement strategy. Although it is hard to see John Sweeney as an apostle of bipartisanship, there is in truth practically no difference between his objectives for the AFL-CIO and Hoffa's for the Teamsters.

There is, to be sure, anger among some within labor over the new alliances with the countercultural Left and the forces of political correctness, a disgust that Hoffa no doubt shares. And, naturally, Hoffa's election may carry important implications when it comes time to select a successor to Sweeney. Teamster votes could be critical in a contest pitting a labor traditionalist against a candidate from the AFL-CIO's left wing.



James P. Hoffa by Roman Genn

In any event, Hoffa will face for the time being a big enough challenge in rebuilding what he calls "Teamster greatness." The union is in a state of marked disarray. A 1989 agreement giving the federal government broad monitoring powers over internal Teamster affairs remains in force, and is not likely to be lifted in the near future.

Membership has declined by nearly 1 million since the heyday of the Seventies. The heart and guts of the Teamster tradition, long-haul trucking, has been decimated by industry deregulation. That the union has not suffered more serious losses can be attributed to the diversity of its membership, which includes warehousemen, UPS deliverymen, newspaper reporters, and government workers. It is, however, a law of trade unionism that a diverse membership is likely to be an uninvolved membership, which may help explain the unimpressive participation of about 30 per cent in the mail-ballot election that anointed Hoffa.

The union is nearly bankrupt, a legacy of Carey's profligate reign and a serious obstacle to Hoffa's ambition to organize thousands of new members. Hoffa may encounter difficulties in consolidating control over his membership. Forty-five per cent of those Teamsters who bothered to vote opted for Hoffa's relatively unknown opponents. He made many promises during the campaign: better contracts, higher pay, aggressive organizing. But the Teamsters are subject to the same pressures that have devastated every other industrial union, and the proposition that Hoffa the son can restore the Teamsters to the strength it enjoyed under his father is scarcely credible.

The Hoffa mystique still counts for something, yes. But insofar as it contributes to unrealistic expectations for a revival of Teamster power, it could prove an albatross around James P.'s neck. Jimmy Hoffa was a smart, dedicated, and ruthless labor leader who was lucky enough to have risen to the top in a golden era for the unionized working man. An industrial-union leader under current conditions is viewed as a success merely if he negotiates a contract whose major feature is a no-layoff clause. It is unlikely that Jimmy Hoffa could do much better if he were alive today. **NR**

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■ CULTURE WATCH ■

Bad Imitation

An Oliver Stone movie finds murderous admirers.

PETER SCHWEIZER

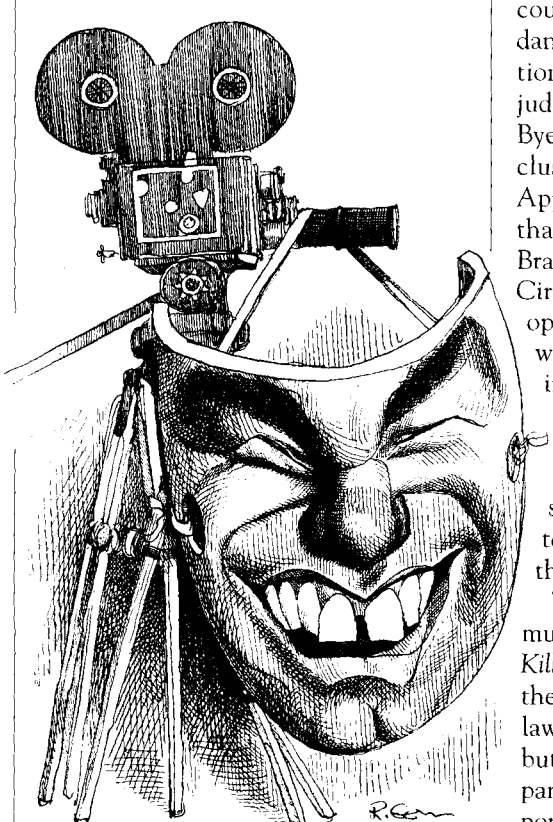
ON the night of March 5, 1995, two teenagers, Sarah Edmondson and Ben Darrus, spent the night together in a Tahlequah, Oklahoma, cabin watching movies and consuming LSD tabs. Actually, they watched only one movie that night, over and over again: *Natural Born Killers*, Oliver Stone's 1994 film about two serial murderers, Mickey and Mallory, who become celebrities. Ben loved the film and had already seen it several times.

Early the next morning, they hit the road in Sarah's Nissan Maxima with a loaded .38 revolver. As they cruised the highway, according to Sarah, Ben began to talk about recreating scenes from the film by randomly killing people, just like the characters Mickey and Mallory. A few days later, on the afternoon of March 7, near Hernando, Mississippi, the two pulled up to a cotton mill. Ben entered the office and shot Bill Savage twice in the head at point-blank range. He took some money, jumped in the car, and they headed back down the highway. As Sarah tells it, the killing animated Ben: "It was as if he was fantasizing from the movie," she later told police.

The next day, around midnight, the two pulled off Interstate 55 and into the parking lot of a Time Saver store in Ponchatoula, Louisiana. This time it was Sarah who got out, entered the store with gun in hand, and shot store cashier Patsy Byers. At first Sarah ran from the store frightened, but then returned to extract money from the till. As Patsy lay on the floor bleeding, Sarah said, "Poor ol' thing. You're not dead yet." (Byers survived the shooting.)

Though other movies have prompted copy-cat crimes, *Natural Born Killers* is in a class by itself. The film has apparently played a role in more than a dozen murders. In a suburb of Paris, two shotgun-toting French students—a 19-year-old girl and her 22-year-old boyfriend—led police on a car chase that ended in the deaths of five, including the boyfriend. The two reportedly loved the movie, and the girl's one comment to police mimicked exactly Mickey's declaration about his own actions in the movie: "It's fate."

In 1994, a 14-year-old boy accused of decapitating a 13-year-old girl in Texas reportedly told police he wanted to be "famous like the natural-born killers." In Utah, a teenager became so obsessed with the movie he shaved his head and wore tinted granny glasses like Mickey, the main character, and allegedly murdered his stepmother and half-sister. A Georgia teenager accused of shooting to death an 82-year-old Florida man shouted at television cameras, "I'm a natural-born killer!" Four other Georgians in their twenties were charged with killing a truck driver and fleeing in his vehicle after watching the movie 19 times. And in Massachusetts, in 1995, three youths ages 18 to 20 were accused of killing an old man, stabbing him 27 times: "Haven't you ever seen *Natural Born Killers* before?" one bragged to his girlfriend.



Oliver Stone by Roman Genn

For their part, Ben Darrus and Sarah Edmondson are expected to spend a long time behind bars. But the family of Patsy Byers believes Oliver Stone and Warner Brothers (which distributed *Natural Born Killers*) also have something to answer for. The family has filed a civil lawsuit against Edmondson (Darrus has no money) and everyone associated with the making and distribution of the film. The suit accuses Stone and Warner Brothers of "distributing a film which they knew or should have known would cause and inspire people to commit crimes."

Similar lawsuits have been filed in the past and gone nowhere, with courts always finding for the defendant, citing First Amendment protections. In January 1997, when district judge Robert Morrison heard the Byers case, he came to the same conclusion. But the Louisiana Court of Appeals reversed Morrison, ruling that the Byers case has merit. Judge Brady Fitzsimmons of Louisiana's First Circuit took Hollywood to task in his opinion, chastising "those who would, for profit or other motive, intentionally assist and encourage crime and then shamelessly seek refuge in the sanctuary of the First Amendment." The Louisiana Supreme Court is expected to decide soon whether it will hear the case.

To win the case, the Byers family must demonstrate that *Natural Born Killers* was a "contributing factor" in the shooting. According to Louisiana law, if several parties are found liable but have unequal assets, the richer parties can be made to pay a disproportionate share of the damages. But they will also need to prove that

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Stone and Warner Brothers knew that the film was likely to lead to violence.

The brief submitted by attorneys to Judge Fitzsimmons, leading to the reversal, is a mix of legal precedent and social commentary. Six times they quote from Robert Bork's *Slouching Towards Gommorah* to make their case. They quote Bork as saying, for example, "The pleasures the viewers of such material get from watching a thousand rape scenes or child kidnappings is not worth one actual rape or kidnapping." Yet Bork himself is not buying the legal reasoning behind the case. "I don't think litigation is the way to solve this problem," he says. "It creates a dangerous precedent. If we want to clean up Hollywood, we should push for industry standards like the old Hayes Commission."

Still, the Byers case has Hollywood good and scared. Los Angeles attorney Robert Vanderet has filed an amicus brief in Louisiana on behalf of a variety of Hollywood titans asking the State Supreme Court to turn down the case. The amicus was signed by the Motion Picture Association of America, the National Cable Television Association, the National Association of Broadcasters, the Recording Industry Association of America, NBC, CBS, and Fox.

"I have never seen the widespread concern in Hollywood that I'm seeing now with the Byers case," says Vanderet, who has represented numerous performers, such as Ozzie Osbourne, in similar suits. "If the plaintiffs win, our libraries will become legal minefields. You could sue the library if your child read Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and later on committed suicide. The implications are enormous."

The plaintiffs contend that *Natural Born Killers*—Mickey and Mallory kill 52 people in the course of a three-week road trip—is anything but Shakespeare. They argue that Ben and Sarah did not have a violent past and that strong parallels exist between the film and the Byers shooting. In *Natural Born Killers*, Mickey and Mallory are tormented by demons and are forced to commit many of their heinous murders because evil forces propel them. According to Edmondson, she saw a "demon" when she saw Patsy Byers that night. And there is also evidence that Stone knew the power of the film's message. On April 14, 1996, he described audience reaction to the *New York Times* in words he probably now regrets: "The most pacifistic people in the world said they came out of this movie and wanted to kill somebody."

But none of this should be enough to convict Oliver Stone. He made a gruesome and immoral film, for which he deserves public obloquy, but not legal liability. And even if all the *Natural Born Killers*-connected slayings would have occurred anyway, Stone should at least feel a twinge of conscience that his work found such a ready home in the fervid imaginations of murderers-in-waiting. If not, it is some consolation that the same legal system that makes cigarette and gun manufacturers tremble has temporarily struck a little fear in the heart of Oliver Stone. **NR**

"Would you mind taking this one? I just had a wash and wax."

■ IN REPLY ■

Goodwill Hunting

How to think about hunting.

ROGER KIMBALL

I AM not myself a hunter. I've often considered taking it up, though, on grounds that anything that so irritates the politically correct must have something going for it.

But Matthew Scully's recent dissent on hunting ("Animal Spirit," November 9) reminded me just how juvenile this attitude of mine is. For one thing, it doesn't necessarily follow that, simply because Al Gore or Barbra Streisand despises something, that something is worthy of commendation. It often works out that way, I know, but it is unbecoming of a rational creature to let the Gores and Streisands of the world define virtue, even negatively.

Second, Mr. Scully's essay was only partly an attack on hunting. Its deeper objection was to what he called the "smug insensibility" of "the Imperial Self, armed and dangerous," of "man the all-conquering consumer facing the universe with limitless entitlements." Hunting—bear hunting in particular—seemed to Mr. Scully to exemplify that "distinctively modern mix of sentimentality and ruthlessness" that has given us the yuppie, with his limitless self-regard, his burden of liberal pieties, his biting intolerance of all who disagree with him.

There is a lot to what Mr. Scully has to say. The question—as some of the critical letters elicited by his essay suggest—is whether hunting re-

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ally deserves the obloquy he marshals against it.

One way of putting this is to ask: Whom would you trust in an emergency? Al Gore? Barbra Streisand? The yuppies who love them? Or the chap down the road who hunts on weekends? I know what I would say.

Animals are not moral beings. We do not arraign lions for murder or apprehend magpies for theft.

A fuller answer is contained in *On Hunting*, a short, charming, and deeply considered discussion of hunting to hounds (a sport very different, to be sure, from bear hunting) by the English philosopher Roger Scruton. There are three categories of people who should read this book: those who hunt; those who think they hate hunting; and those who don't care about hunting one way or the other but whose feeling for nature has not been entirely eclipsed by the incursions of urban life. You know who you are.

Mr. Scruton's book is part autobiography, part philosophical rumination, part polemic. The gist of the book is encapsulated in the very first sentence: "My life divides into three parts. In the first I was wretched; in the second ill at ease; in the third hunting." The rest of the autobiography explains why. The philosophical part of *On Hunting* revolves around a question that is also at the center of Mr. Scully's reflections: namely, what is man's proper place in the order of nature? Whatever disagreements they may have about hunting, what finally places Messrs. Scruton and Scully on the same side in this debate are the fundamental convictions: that there is such a thing as an "order of nature"; that it makes sense to speak of man's "proper" place within that order. It is our task to decide whether hunting counts as a violation of that propriety.

This brings us to the polemical part of Mr. Scruton's book, which is directed primarily against those who seek to criminalize hunting in Britain. The essence of his argument occurs in the last dozen or so pages. "Animals," he observes, "are not moral beings; they have neither rights nor duties, they are not sovereign over their own lives, and they can commit no crimes." We do not arraign lions for murder or apprehend magpies for theft. Indeed, "to treat animals as moral beings is to mistreat them—it is to make demands which they could not satisfy, since they cannot understand them as demands." Mr. Scruton is quick to add that "it does not follow, however, that we can treat animals as we wish." The demands of morality involve pity and compassion as well as duty, and there can be, he argues, no justification for gratuitous cruelty to animals.

Is hunting a form of cruelty to animals? Mr. Scruton distinguishes rather sharply between fox hunting, where the hounds—natural predators of foxes—do the killing, and other sorts of hunting. ("Shooting and angling," he says, "seem too much like hubris, swaggering displays of prowess made possible by mere machinery.") About hunting to hounds, at any rate, he makes a convincing argument that the fox is "better served by hunting than by any other form of cull, and that all rival practices expose him to far more suffering." It follows that hunting is "not just permissible . . . but morally right."

I suspect that Mr. Scruton's arguments about hunting to hounds could be extended to many, perhaps most, forms of hunting. The real enemy—as Mr. Scully implies and Mr. Scruton argues outright—is sentimentality: emotion that is counterfeited in the face of a moral void. "I admit that the English sentimentality over animals is rather endearing," Mr. Scruton writes. "But it is also a vice. Animals cannot answer back. They cannot puncture our illusions. They allow us complete freedom to invent their feelings for them, to project into their innocent eyes a fantasy world in which we are the heroes, and to lay our phony passions before them without fear of moral rebuke. They are the easy option for the emotionally deprived."

Whatever one's attitude toward hunting, it is difficult not to be moved by Mr. Scruton's book. This is because it is about much more than hunting. Or, as Mr. Scruton would perhaps prefer to put it, it is because hunting is about much more than hunting. It is about our rights and duties in a world where respect and reverence seem increasingly atavistic.

Mr. Scruton observes that "the suicide of nations begins" when "sentimentality prevails over sense." He extols hunting partly because it is an antidote to sentimentality, partly because, properly pursued, it aids in the renewal of that humility before nature whose loss Mr. Scully lamented. **NR**

Frederick H. Carlson

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■ COVER STORY ■

The Partisans

Judiciary Committee Republicans defy bipartisanship and make history.

RICHARD LOWRY

A SMALL part of the sky over Antarctica, New York Democrat Charles Schumer explained during the House impeachment hearings, is pink. Schumer, with a gravelly Brooklyn accent and reading glasses that he occasionally peeks out over the top of, for an extra air of gravity, likes to hear himself talk. And now he was reaching for the metaphor that would explain it all, this tangle of lies and sex and the law. So, he continued, if you asked a witness, "Is the sky blue?," he might well answer no. "It seems to me if you value our system of laws," Schumer concluded, "if you are not hair-splitting, that that is not perjurious per se unless you could get inside that person's head and know that they never saw the pink square of sky."

So, after months of cynically seconding White House denials and more months of attacking Kenneth Starr, Democrats were down to their rock-bottom defense: even denying that the sky is blue would not be a lie. The House Judiciary Committee hearings, which often played to a half-empty room, like the hit of the summer held over a couple of weeks too long, were the occasion for a debate over the meaning of truth and language, a clash between a view of public life as bound by certain unspoken, common-sense normative rules, and a politics of solipsism and dizzying irrationality, too small to deserve the public's full attention.

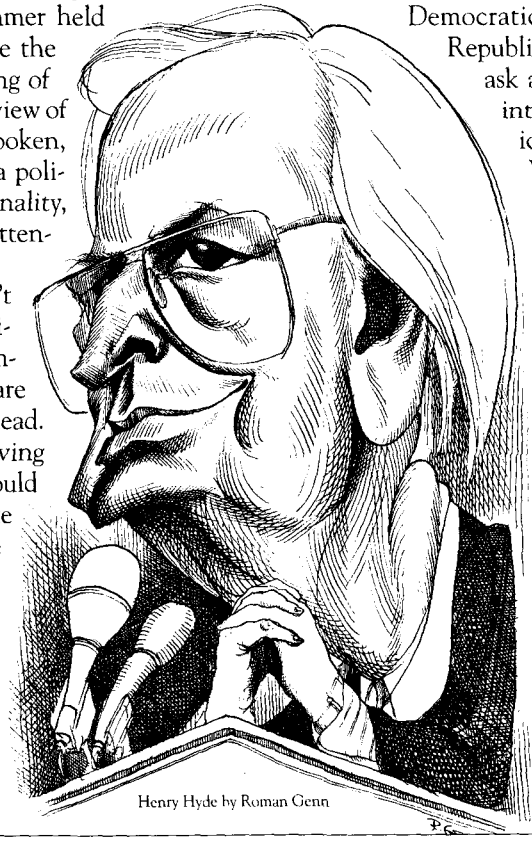
Which will prevail, of course, won't be clear for a long time, as the four articles of impeachment passed by the committee seep into our discourse and are interpreted in the months and years ahead. But at least Republicans insisted on having the argument, which is more than could have been expected in the immediate aftermath of the elections. The White House made a show during the hearings of being non-confrontational, but the scorn it must feel for the Republicans came through in the testimony of Princeton historian Sean Wilentz, who all but called them cowards and warned that they would be hunted down by history like dogs, all in a tone he must otherwise reserve for undergraduates who can't write between the lines of their blue books.

How dare they! The hearings, as many commentators remarked, lacked sizzle, but they made up for it with a plodding dignity. Beneath the 30-foot ceilings of the hearing room, whose walls feature large oil paintings of former chairmen and the current chairman, Henry Hyde, the committee debated removing from office the most powerful politician on the planet with only the occasional disruption of the sharp crack of the chairman's gavel. It is a tribute to the majesty of American democracy that such a proceeding should be—not chaotic, not bloody—but boring.

UNADORNED DECENCY

It is also a tribute to Henry Hyde. Slow of step, in ill-fitting, off-the-rack suits and big, out-of-fashion eyeglasses, Hyde was the anchor of the proceedings, a man of unadorned decency, decorous and civil, but willing to impose discipline and answer Democratic arguments. Whenever he asked a Republican colleague to yield time for him to ask a question, it was sure to be something intelligent and pointed. "What's the significance," he asked the ancient, Yoda-like Watergate veteran and impeachment foe Father Robert Drinan, "of asking God to witness to the truth of what you're saying?" What, indeed?

One reason for the relative lack of drama was that Ivy League professors were witnesses instead of Monica, or Linda Tripp, or President Clinton. Republicans suggested the White House didn't call any "fact witnesses" because it can't dispute the fundamentals of Starr's case. In this they were right. But Democrats had a point too when they said Republicans wanted at all costs to avoid talking about sex. When the rare Republican would mention the word, it was uncomfortable, as though something had been said in poor taste at a dinner party. The lisping, fast-talking Barney Frank would be sure to prompt twitters



Henry Hyde by Roman Genn

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whenever he announced that the case was fundamentally about "who touched what."

On that question and others, the White House admitted that Clinton was "misleading," "maddening," "wrong," "sinful," and, in the President's own words (spoken during his sixth public apology), "deceitful and manipulative." But he managed to be all these things—the only adjective left out is "evil"—without once telling a lie. White House special counsel Gregory Craig opened his testimony by solemnly recounting how the President urged his lawyers to forgo technicalities

Clinton is a charming rogue who apparently has a great psychic investment in the idea that he isn't a rogue.

in his defense, only to be forced to try to explain why Clinton denied any recollection of being alone with his favorite pizza-delivery girl. The White House position is now that reasonable people might conclude that the President lied. In fact, even unreasonable people do—Barney Frank, Charles Schumer, and other Democrats among them.

Why then the White House denials? The ready explanation is that Clinton fears a perjury prosecution after he leaves office. But one of the most convincing Clinton defense panels argued that Clinton would never be prosecuted for his conduct. No, the White House stands on his denial—which means it has to continue to mislead and evade and anger Republicans—for two reasons: 1) The President's pride. If he had been willing from the beginning to admit that he's a lech, the scandal would be long behind him. But Clinton is a charming rogue who apparently has a great psychic investment in the idea that he isn't a rogue. 2) The political implications. There is a great qualitative difference between being shifty and asking God to witness your lies. The former is to be expected, the latter is a moral offense that should disqualify one from the public trust.

So the White House went to work denying the President had lied or committed perjury. Its heavy hitter was White House counsel Charles F. C. Ruff, a brooding, dignified presence in a wheelchair, sitting alone behind the plain brown witness table that had a felt top like a barroom pool table. Arrayed in the first row behind Ruff was a bevy of presidential advisers and lawyers—Bruce Lindsey, David Kendall, Craig, and others—who ostentatiously yucked it up before the hearing as if they were all settling in to watch a production of their favorite musical comedy. The buttoned-up Kendall brought with him a briefcase the size of a suitcase, stuffed full of volumes of the Starr Report, Post-it notes marking important pages. Here were the men who helped get the President where he is today, ready bravely to go once more into the breach for the sake of another insupportable legal distinction.

Perjury convictions hang on technicalities and the intent of the deceiver. But the White House interpretation of perjury has about it a Through the Looking Glass subjectivity: as long as Bill Clinton thinks to himself that there is *any* possible way to defend his answers, no matter how contrived or unreasonable, it can't be perjury. As Ruff explained: "In his mind—and that's the heart and soul of perjury—he thought and he believed that what he was doing was being evasive but truthful." And Clinton's state of mind conveniently shifts according to circumstance: sometimes he understands the definition of sex so exquisitely he can tip-toe around it in brilliant fashion; other times he is too confused and bored by all the legalisms to correct his lawyer when Mr. Bennett cryptically announces, "There is absolutely no sex."

Anyone buying this must eventually declare, like the fool in the Bible, "There is no truth." It is this aspect of the President's defense more than any other that seemed to outrage majority counsel David Schippers, the straightforward Midwestern lawyer whose scornful summation of the case against Clinton captured the spirit of the Republican majority. Democrats were willing to play footsie with the White House perjury defense, but the heart of their argument was that Clinton shouldn't be removed because his offense didn't involve an abuse of office or an affront to the constitutional system.

Obviously, this view enjoys considerable public support. It is buttressed, no doubt, by the latent public sense that these questions never should have been asked of the President in the first place, that they were the product of a legal system warped by the excesses of sexual-harassment law and the independent-counsel statute. But the fact is that they were asked, and in lying in his answers—then using the power of his office to try to escape the consequences—President Clinton acted in knowing defiance of the law. Yes, the underlying matter was a juvenile sexual escapade, but Clinton's conduct should be disqualifying by its very nature—as if he had taken a bribe, though a piddling one that he now feels really, really sorry about.

PUBLIC LAZINESS

The Democrats' fallback position is that it is just too much trouble to consider these questions seriously. They constantly invoke the idea that a Senate trial could take months, thus distracting that august body from its everyday work of killing bills sent over from the House. Rep. Zoe Lofgren, the wide-eyed Democrat from California, complained that people were too busy with Christmas shopping to pay attention to the impeachment vote and breathlessly asked a witness how the stock market would weather a Senate trial. Clinton witness Edward Dennis, a former Justice Department official, warned that such a proceeding would be "extremely divisive of the country, inflaming the passions" of Clinton voters. Divisiveness, passions inflamed—Heaven forfend!

All this is, of course, just an appeal to public laziness (see "Femme Fatale," page 29). So, in its way, is the insistence on bipartisanship. Veterans of Watergate were trotted out to warn against any impeachment vote that can't win the support of Jerry Nadler and Maxine Waters. But on this matter, at least among this group of Republicans, all the usual limp excuses for avoiding any act not focus-grouped and stamped for approval by the *New York Times* would be ignored. "He committed grand-jury perjury," South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham told the Watergate panel. "And when you come to believe that like we do, if it's 21-16, so be it." And so it was. **NR**

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Moderate Ambitions

GOP moderates were in the spotlight on impeachment. Get used to it.

KATE O'BEIRNE

IN the days leading up to the historic floor vote on impeachment, Republican staffers estimated that about twenty GOP congressmen were truly undecided. Some published lists of fence-sitters doubled that estimate, but those lists included members who wanted to remain publicly uncommitted while they privately assured colleagues that they supported impeachment. "Only undecided Republicans are invited on *Meet the Press*," observed one unofficial Republican vote-counter.

But the moderate Republicans are going to have plenty of moments in the sun after they reach a decision on impeachment. If the 104th Congress was dominated by the "majority makers" who elected Newt Gingrich Speaker, the 106th will be shaped by the "majority breakers" who now hold the GOP conference hostage. Thinking about the narrower GOP majority in the next House, a leadership aide glumly asked, "Do you realize that every time six Republicans gather at a mike to oppose the leadership, we'll be stalled?" The struggle over impeachment is merely a foretaste of the power moderate Republicans are going to wield.

The fight over wavering Republicans began when Rep. Peter King of New York announced on television that he opposed impeachment and was sure that 15 to 20 Republican members did the same. King's estimate was based on conversations with both moderate and conservative colleagues and reflected last month's widespread assumption that impeachment was dead. Based on his own preference and instinct, however, Majority Whip Tom DeLay responded that impeachment remained a possibility.

King believes that DeLay's comments drew a partisan line on impeachment, which caused some Republicans who were leaning against impeachment to jump on the fence. And the President did himself no good with wavering Republicans. His too-cute responses to the Judiciary Committee's 81 questions revealed a contempt for the House that riled Republicans. "That's when some Republicans decided that he just doesn't get it and deserves whatever happens to him," a GOP staffer explained.

The White House asked King which moderate Republicans they should try to win over, but King told them that "as a conservative, I really don't know those guys too well." Rep. Michael Castle of Delaware withdrew his invitation for King to join a conference call to discuss the censure option when his fellow moderates balked at including the conservative King.

While King's new moderate allies are unfriendly, conservatives in his district are furious. "In my 27 years as chairman of the Conservative Party in Nassau County, I have never had as many calls as now in opposition to Peter King's position on impeachment," declares Jack O'Leary. O'Leary reports that members of his own executive committee are openly talking about supporting a primary challenge to King because "people who vote for him are in favor of impeachment, despite what polls say." Almost all of the New York Republicans who have announced that they oppose impeachment enjoy the endorsement of the state's Conservative Party. One of them, Rep. Amo Houghton, earned himself an announced primary challenger for 2000 just 48 hours after his anti-impeachment op-ed ran in the *New York Times*.

TUG OF WAR

The anti-impeachment pressure on the swing New York Republican delegation comes from Governor George Pataki, Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and Senator Al D'Amato, and from the fact that Clinton carried all 13 GOP districts in 1996. Republican vote-counters worry most about the outspoken opposition to impeachment of GOP Governors, which could isolate some members politically. By voting for impeachment, Rep. Nancy Johnson of Connecticut puts herself in the tough position of bucking both Gov. John Rowland and her only Connecticut Republican colleague, Rep. Christopher Shays.

Still, the conservative pro-impeachment agitation had an effect on some Republicans. After Illinois's John Porter expressed misgivings about impeachment, the Republican women's club in Porter's district unanimously approved a resolution in support of it. Veteran conservative activist Kathy Rothschild sent Porter a letter announcing she was seriously considering challenging him in the 2000 primary. Porter, who ran unopposed in the last election, joined the Republican fence-sitters.

None of the pressure, however, came from the House leadership. Reporters scoffed

Peter King and William Weld by Roman Genn

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at DeLay's assertion that he hadn't contacted colleagues to urge support for impeachment—but it was true. DeLay remained inactive in order to avoid distracting charges of strong-arming. In the days leading up to the floor vote, Republican members of the Judiciary Committee began quietly to contact undecided members, offering to answer questions or provide analysis. Committee Chairman Henry Hyde planned to meet with small groups of Republicans when they returned to Washington, to make the case for impeachment. Anything more aggressive, Republicans figured, would probably backfire.

As the White House's heavy-handed lobbying certainly did. Republicans were disturbed to learn that one Cabinet member called a government contractor to urge him to have his Washington office contact members on behalf of the White House. A White House official called Florida Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart to discuss supplemental funding for the victims of Hurricane Mitch, and then added that White House counsel Charles Ruff was standing by to answer any questions about impeachment. Rep. Jay Dickey of Arkansas was furious that a White House aide, quoted in a newspaper in his district, threatened the end of his political career if he supported impeachment.

In the face of this all-out White House effort, GOP staffers were quietly sharing secondhand intelligence about the positions of their own members. A veteran Republican vote-counter fretted, "I think that the votes could be there for impeachment, but am afraid we won't get them because the White House and Democrats are whipping this vote and we're not." Watching victory slip away because Republicans don't have the Democrats' party discipline: it may prove a familiar story in the next Congress. **NR**

Femme Fatale

Is the softening of American culture ruining our politics?

RAMESH PONNURU

THE House votes on whether to impeach the President, and the nation yawns. According to the polls, the American people are sick unto death of the Lewinsky scandal. They would much rather talk about the important issues.

But the American people are lying. Sure, the scandal turns them off. But they were disengaged from politics long before they had heard of Monica Lewinsky. It was clear in 1997 that public attention was turning from the political to the cultural. The top stories of 1997 were Princess Diana's death and the trial of Timothy McVeigh; of political stories, only campaign-finance and military scandals made the top ten. When pollsters asked people to rank the political issues they found most important, nothing got more than 25 per cent—generally a sign of an apathetic electorate.

The Promise Keepers marched on Washington, true, but to get media attention, not to ask anything from Congress or the White House. Political pundits found that nobody wanted to listen to them, not even the corporate associations that used to fly them to the hinterlands for amusement. Political maga-

Americans have joined the leave-us-alone coalition. They want conservatives to leave them alone.

zines saw their circulations decline, and political books went unsold. CNN canceled *Capital Gang Sunday* for poor ratings. Dr. Laura's audience numbers briefly eclipsed Rush Limbaugh's. Limbaugh's subsequent recovery, along with the boosted ratings and expanded time slots for political talk shows this year, suggests that scandal has increased interest in politics among segments of the population.

Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, likes to describe the forces of political conservatism as a "leave us alone coalition" of parents trying to raise their children without state interference, farmers trying to keep control of their land, gun owners trying to protect their silos, etc. It turns out that the vast majority of Americans have joined the leave-us-alone coalition—with a vengeance. They want conservatives and libertarians to leave them alone, too, not to bother them with talk of privatization and reform.

This anti-political tendency is probably endemic to liberal democracies, especially in times of peace and prosperity. It is encouraged by the politics of consensus and trivia that has characterized President Clinton's second term. But as Norquist's formulation suggests, it has also been encouraged by the conservative slogans of the last generation. Plenty of conservatives, indeed, have professed satisfaction at the public's lack of interest in politics and disdain for politicians—but fewer than did last year. Unhappy is the nation consumed by politics. A nation that affects a pseudo-sophisticated cynicism about politics, however, will find it impossible to hold real miscreants accountable because "they all do it."

Thus actress Janeane Garofalo on one of *Larry King Live*'s ludicrous panels: "[Clinton critics are] going on the theory that all other Presidents have been honest and good. And that somehow Bill Clinton's character is the only questionable character that's ever been in the White House," even though it's impossible to become President "without lying basically the whole way up." (It is a testament to the weakness of our political culture, by the way, that celebrities are now routinely invited to add spice to it.) Nor does this contemptuous attitude serve the cause of limited government: a people without respect for government will not hesitate to ask it to lower their cable bills and fluff their pillows.

Politics has a bad reputation in part because it involves argument, or "petty bickering." And that, in turn, fits poorly with a contemporary shift in American sensibilities that is perhaps

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deeper than any change in morals or views. The new sensibility reacts negatively to strong personalities. (If Douglas MacArthur was too much for Americans to take in the 1950s, he would be positively terrifying today.) It is uncomfortable with sharply defined arguments; it wishes to defer tough choices for as long as possible. It is emotional rather than logical. Michael Barone recently described this political style in *National Journal* as "sogginess," as opposed to "crunchiness." Clinton, all things to all people, is soggy. Republicans, who

If Douglas MacArthur was too much for Americans to take in the 1950s, he would be positively terrifying today.

were willing to shut down the government to force a choice over its direction, have been crunchy. Sogginess won.

It's still winning. One reason the impeachment debate has hurt Republicans' image is that they have been perceived as trying to force the public to make a choice it would rather duck. Several polls have found that the public says that law-breakers are not fit for office, that Clinton is a law-breaker, and that Clinton is fit for office. In one focus group, women broke down in tears when asked to resolve this cognitive dissonance. No wonder the public favors the soggy option of censure.

This is a womanly approach to politics, and its prevalence will grow as politicians court "soccer moms." The spread of sogginess is, in fact, part of the much-remarked feminization of America, as is the shift from public life to private life. A feminizing tendency, too, is probably built into liberal democracy, and within bounds it's a good thing: it civilizes and tames men. But taken too far, it threatens the masculine stubbornness and intractability that serves as a bulwark for republicanism. Francis Fukuyama, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, has recently reminded us that women have been less supportive than men of every war America has fought this century, including World War II and the Gulf War. Women also tend to be more averse to risk than men. The shifting politics of guns and tobacco in the Nineties suggests that ours is not a populace jealous of its liberties. And it is no accident that these liberties have traditionally been associated with men, and macho risk-takers at that.

JUDGE NOT

Conservative politicians have tried to adapt to the new mood by professing their "compassion," but the effectiveness of this tactic has its limits. The antonym of compassion in our increasingly feminized political culture is "mean-spiritedness," and this is a vice inherent in conservatism. Social conservatism is mean because it judges; and the credo of soggy America is, "Judge not, lest ye be judgmental." Hence America seems to be getting more socially liberal in theory even as it turns more socially conservative in practice. As usual, economic conservatism cannot sever its fortunes from social conservatism: insisting on formal restraints that keep government from helping people is also mean. And rational politics in general will have rough sledding through a sea of fudge. If judgment is impossible, objective reason must be unable to arrive at public truths. In that case, men in public life cannot offer arguments but only proofs of virtue—of how much they care.

The refrain of Clinton apologists that "it's time to move on" from the President's public character to allegedly more important matters like campaign-finance reform or HMO regulation is thus deceptive. Let's be honest: the public has even less interest in these policy issues than in Clinton's malfeasance. To ask the public to "move on" under these circumstances is to encourage it to retreat from politics altogether—to shirk the (manly?) duties of public life, which include holding public officials accountable. It is to abandon self-governance itself as just too much trouble. *Newsday*, however inadvertently, caught the real appeal of "it's time to move on" perfectly in its editorial on Clinton's August DNA speech: "He hasn't been much of a President and he's even less of a human being, but it's still not worth the strain of impeaching him." **NR**

Watergate Babies

Veterans of Watergate think no scandal measures up to their own.

JAY NORDLINGER

JOHN Dean remembers when the Republic teetered on a precipice, with night falling all around. "There was a sense of fear in the air," he recently told the *Washington Post*. "It really sent a shudder" through the land. The most patriotic heads "thought this man might do something really troubling." This was far from "lying about sex"; this was genuinely "frightening."

The event, of course, was Richard Nixon's firing of Archibald Cox as Watergate special prosecutor, the key moment in the history of American fascism. Dean—like others from that era—cherishes the memory, and will brook no comparisons. Never mind that Cox was duly replaced by Leon Jaworski, who did a perfectly respectable job of driving Nixon from office. Dean and his brethren have a manifest interest in guarding the uniqueness of their experience.

Call it scandal jealousy; or, as the anti-Clinton priestess Lucianne Goldberg does, "Carl Bernstein disease" (named after the Nixon-toppling investigative journalist who tells anyone who will listen that the pursuit of the current President is absurd). The veterans of Watergate are furious that others have encroached on their turf, daring to oust another President and, worse, citing the precedent of 1973-74 in doing so.

One after another they come, crying, in effect, "No war like our war, no idealism like our idealism, no national cataclysm

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like our national cataclysm!" In a kind of last hurrah, they are instructing America in constitutional principles, according to which only Presidents named Nixon can commit impeachable offenses. They are worried that, with Clinton down, their "legacy," as Father Robert Drinan likes to say, will be sullied. So they scold today's impeachment forces with an almost comical passion. Murmured one Washington observer, "Can you imagine if Barbara Jordan were alive?"

DEAN OF PUNDITS

Few would have guessed, back in January, that John Dean would be one of the media stars of 1998. But there he is, mainly on NBC's cable spinoffs, bantering with the anchormen, stroking his chin, and tut-tutting with Lanny Davis. After his turn as a Watergate witness 25 years ago, Dean entered the federal witness-protection program, then took up investment banking. Geraldo Rivera—the most resourceful of the Clinton media apologists—resurrected him in midsummer, putting him on the air to deliver one message: whereas Watergate was momentous, Monicagate is trivial.

At the end of their first segment together, Rivera—as if in acknowledgement of the oddness of Dean's resurfacing—asked, "How's life, by the way?" To which the former Nixon aide replied, "Life is well."

It got even better for him. The more apt the Watergate analogy grew, the more Dean was needed to throw cold water on it. Linda Tripp had proposed to write an exposé of the Clinton White House under the name "Joan Dean," a concept that appalled the President's defenders. The real Dean assured his audiences that he himself had refused to wear a wire (to incriminate John Mitchell, among others), unlike the dastardly Tripp. He complained of "a very aggressive prosecutorial effort to nail the President." He published in the *New York Times* an open letter to Monica Lewinsky, warning the young temptress of the pitfalls of public testimony. And he mastered the art of the soundbite, opining that the Nixon presidency saw "a lot of hate crimes" while the Clinton presidency had featured "a lot of love crimes."

Rivera gushed. He was openly proud of his rediscovery, offering Dean night after night as the man who "knows better than anyone else how different the two scandals are." Dean—silver-haired and measured—developed a reputation as a sage (at one point, Rivera turned to him and said, "John Dean, be our wise man now"). He could occasionally sound like a cross between Mike McCurry and Leo Buscaglia, judging Roger Clinton (with whom he had "chatted before the show") to be someone with "a lot of love for his brother," not "sophisticated about politics," but a striver who had learned from "his own mistakes." And "I think we all, Geraldo, learn a lot more from what we do wrong than what we do right. Those mistakes really are the great teachers"—which elicited from Rivera a Seventies-like, "Oh man, definitely they are!"

Carl Bernstein, another darling of Nixon's demise, is plainly chagrined to be out of the action. He has been penning op-ed pieces and visiting the talk shows, utterly dismissive of the efforts to investigate Bill Clinton. Echoing a popular talking point of the moment, Bernstein griped in August that "there is no proportionality here." He urged the country to shrink from a "legal confrontation" over a "consensual sexual affair." Kenneth Starr, he alleged, was using "a Nuremberg prosecution for war crimes" against a "jaywalking offense."

They are instructing us in constitutional principles, whereby only Presidents named Nixon can be impeached.

In an early-October essay, widely reprinted, the once-hungry reporter let it all hang out. Watergate actors, he wrote, "all approached their roles with awe and a sense of heavy responsibility to the nation." The present period? A "moment of national madness." A quarter-century ago, the Rodino Committee (which, in truth, was largely a collection of hacks, now made out to be a sort of ultra-pure Round Table) exhibited "bipartisan purpose" and "reverence for the Constitution." The Hyde Committee, meanwhile, is a farce. Thank Heaven, said Bernstein, for "the sophistication and discrimination of most of the population," which has kept Clinton's poll numbers high.

Then, in a lovely Nixonian twist, Bernstein ascribed the campaign against Clinton to "payback"—"going back to Watergate, to Robert Bork, to Clarence Thomas, to the reprimand of Gingrich, to the shutdown of the government, to gays in the military, to 'Mrs. President.'" If this line seems familiar, it should: Nixon and his defenders employed it themselves, incessantly. Watergate, they claimed, had little to do with the stated charges, but was rather a form of retribution for the Hiss-Chambers case, the defeat of Mrs. Douglas, the weathering of the Special Fund controversy, the two-time dusting of Stevenson, the challenge to John Kennedy, and—last but not least—"peace with honor."

There is, to be sure, a bit

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of truth in both variations of this rhetorical tack. But that Bernstein and others like him should follow it so reflexively is, at a minimum, remarkable.

Suffering badly, of course, from Carl Bernstein disease are Democratic alumni of the Rodino Committee, three of whom appeared before the Hyde Committee as (in the words of one) "ghosts of impeachment past." Father Drinan, Elizabeth

Drinan refused to concede that a President could be impeached for murder—murder, that is, committed for private reasons.

Holtzman, and Wayne Owens pleaded with the Republican majority to let Nixon's impeachment stand untainted by Clinton's. Drinan recalled the congressional comity and prayerful deliberation that prevailed in his day, "when the dignity and the majesty of the Rodino Committee was not out to embarrass or humiliate President Nixon." Drinan also refused to concede that a President could be impeached for murder—murder, that is, committed for strictly private, not governmental, reasons (although such murder, presumably, would even so not be consensual).

Holtzman reminded the committee that she and her colleagues had declined to recommend Nixon's impeachment for tax fraud, so respectful were they of the gravity of this action—"a last resort to preserve our democracy," which "must not be perverted or trivialized." Yet neither Holtzman nor Drinan had ever been so gingerly about impeachment. Drinan moved to impeach Nixon for the bombing in Cambodia (with Holtzman's support). And—as the *New York Post* editorial page was quick to point out—Holtzman herself voted to impeach Nixon on taxes, a fact that she chose to omit from her testimony.

There are, naturally, great differences between Watergate and the Monica follies; but there are marked similarities, too (particularly in the area of obstruction of justice). Above all else, what the Clintonites cannot abide is any mixing of their man's name with that of Nixon, two of the most damning syllables in the American political vocabulary. For years, "Nixon" has served as an almost unanswerable epithet, shaming the GOP. In 1984, Walter Mondale—piqued at President Reagan's frequent invocation of FDR, Truman, and Kennedy—advised Republicans to "stick with your own heroes: Harding, Hoover, and Nixon" (and how he lingered over this last!).

Watergate always meant that Democrats could affect superiority over Republicans (and that Republicans like Dean—and Elliott Richardson—could affect superiority over other Republicans). Charles Colson remembers how the young Hillary Rodham, a lawyer on the Watergate Committee, stared at him—smug, triumphant, "beady-eyed"—as he sweated it out at the witness table. And all of that, now, has been placed in jeopardy. That is why Democratic counsel Abbe Lowell insists, "The more we all try to dress ourselves up in the clothes of Watergate, the more we see they simply do not fit." That is why the columnist Al Hunt asserts, inanely, that majority counsel David Schippers—who does nothing if not exude moral and legal authority—"lacks the gravitas of a John Doar" (the chief Watergate counsel). That is why the hysterical Rep. Bob Wexler, Democrat of Florida, protests, when asked about the Clinton inquiry, "It's not historic!"

But it is. And those who have derived a goodly portion of their political validation from the disgrace of Nixon can hardly bear it. Clinton—the anti-Nixon, the avatar of the baby-boomers, the promiser of "the most ethical administration in history"—was not supposed to share this fate. And he must not. For the knights of Watergate can countenance only one impeachment in their lifetimes, and it has already occurred (with themselves, as luck would have it, as the heroes). In their minds, their scandal will always and forever be bigger than anyone else's; and never again will living be quite so important. **NR**

Neuroscience and the Human Spirit

Explanations of man's behavior advance, but science doesn't—and can't—have all the answers.

WILLIAM J. BENNETT

FOR more than three decades, Tom Wolfe has been an astute observer of the rise and fall of contemporary fashions, heroes, and mores. In the 1970s, he wrote about hippies. In the 1980s, he wrote about Wall Street stockbrokers. In the 1990s, though, he has written about neuroscientists.

Neuroscience is "hot." Even Larry King recently called the Nineties "the decade of the brain." Are neuroscientists the new Masters of the Universe? They certainly enjoy great prestige, and for many good reasons. Their research has led to dramatic and more humane treatments of persons suffering from mental disease, depression, and physical injury to the brain and nervous system. Alzheimer's disease may be cured within the next decade. Paralysis as the result of trauma to the spinal chord has been made less common. As I learned in my work as President Bush's drug czar, neuroscience has taught us a great deal about addiction; about, for example, the effects of cocaine on dopamine neurotransmission; of LSD on serotonin; and of chronic inhalant abuse on myelin. This knowl-

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edge has helped us take useful action against the scourge of drug abuse.

Not surprisingly, the reputation of scientists is at an all-time high. In a recent poll, a majority of Americans said they trust the scientific community more than almost anyone, including the Supreme Court, organized religion, Congress, teachers, and the U.S. military. (Only doctors—viewed by the public as a subset of scientists—have more prestige.) Scientific advances are leading us to dream of a better world, leading us to imagine a world free of disease, pain, suffering, anxiety, and even unhappiness.

Science looks especially good in comparison with its seeming competitors. It remains a preserve of what is best in the American university. While too many seminars in religion, literature, history, and philosophy chase trends, discard the search for knowledge, and marginalize the idea of objectivity, the sciences by and large remain devoted to their methods and to the search for truth.

The accomplishments of science are legion. Can the humanities make that boast today? The view of many opinionmakers is that, at best, the contributions of religion and philosophy are fuzzy; at worst, they have inflamed passions and incited extremist political movements, genocide, and world wars. Having subverted their own claim to authority by all too often trading intellectual integrity for political correctness, the humanities now face the attack and even mockery of an ever more confident science.

While religion or philosophy or literature once held the promise of answering man's deepest questions, now science seems to have taken the reins. And so the claim has arisen that science will be able to replace the humanities and unify all knowledge, will answer all the meaningful questions. One prominent scientist tells us that beliefs in souls and spirits arose as crude "hypotheses intended to explain certain data that stymie our everyday theories." He assures us that we are now more blessed, for, he argues, "modern science has come up with a better theory of shadows and reflections."

THE MATERIALIST TEMPTATION

Recall the great questions of philosophy: What is man? What am I to do? What am I to hope for? A number of scientists, and their fans, seem to consider these questions—perhaps the clearest manifestations of the human spirit—products of our nescient childhood. Now that we are scientists, we can put away childish things—including the concepts of God, the human soul, and moral responsibility.

One advocate of this view, M.I.T. Professor Steven Pinker, argues that science is itself an evolutionary development of the brain. The mind, he claims, evolved to provide just such empirical accounts of the world. Pinker further asserts that, given this evolutionary history, the mind is *unsuited* to any other task than inquiry. While he admits that man has always asked questions about the meaning of the world and human existence, these questions of religion and philosophy are not truly meaningful ones. For religion and philosophy are but the primitive responses to the unknown. Once we have developed our scientific understanding—that is, once evolution has proceeded, once we have ascended from our delusional, pre-scientific caves—we can explain these responses as adaptive mechanisms for our earlier ignorance.

This sort of argument isn't new under the sun. In the nineteenth century, Napoleon said to Laplace: "You have written this huge book [*Celestial Mechanics*] without once mentioning the Author of the universe," to which Laplace replied, "Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis." (Laplace's book turned out to be wrong. Quantum physics has shown that we simply cannot know the position and direction of every particle in the universe, a hypothesis that Laplace's declarations depended on.)

Today's scientists may approach these kinds of broad, deterministic claims with more caution than did Laplace. But the fact is that some highly regarded, well-respected, influential scientists sound like Laplace. Tom Wolfe writes: "[T]he new

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Now that we are scientists, we can put away childish things—including the concepts of God, the human soul, and moral responsibility.

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generation of neuroscientists are not cautious for a second. In private conversations, the bull sessions, as it were, that create the mental atmosphere of any hot new science . . . they express an uncompromising determinism."

Harvard professor E. O. Wilson, for instance, has recently written a book called *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. According to the scientifically based consilient worldview, it explains, "All tangible phenomena from the birth of stars to the workings of social institutions are based on *material processes* that are ultimately reducible, however long and torturous, to the laws of physics" (emphasis added). God is dead, because He never was alive.

If the Laplacian view is not new, neither are the reasons for its current appeal. People have always sought simplicity and unity. Throughout the history of science and philosophy, intelligent men have often made the claim that there was only one principle that accounts for reality. It started with a philosopher named Thales, who thought that all that was, was water. Water, the original source and ultimate substance of the universe, explained everything. (For the record, Aristotle called Thales "lisping and childish.")

Another reason for the prominence of this view is that science has succeeded in so many fields. Science has explained things that had gone unexplained for ages. People predict—they trust—that this success will go on, through all areas of human inquiry, forever. The claim has power because the claimants have prestige.

Finally, this view is appealing to some from a moral perspective. If we can give up religion, the spirit, and the soul, we can give up their demands, too. People are not morally responsible if they are wholly controlled by laws of biology, chemistry, and physics. Recall Edmund in *King Lear*:

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This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star!

BEYOND SCIENCE

For all its attractions, the deterministic argument is untenable. Take the notion that science is itself an evolutionary development of the brain. For one thing, there is the breathtaking circularity of the argument. Science exists. But where does it come from? It comes from the brain. How? By the brain's evolutionary development. How do we know? Because science exists, and that's the only way it could have developed.

Let's say that we are hard-wired; that all we do is explicable by biological and physical processes; that we are programmed, just like a robot. Who wrote the program for the robot? Did the program arise spontaneously? Who or what explains the spontaneity? And if there is a programmer—what we used to call God—that programmer, if He wished, could have granted us free will. We simply do not know which it is. The assertion that there is no God is, at root, just an assertion.

Keep in mind that there are many scientists of note who accept all that science has proven, but who still believe in God and human freedom. Why? Because materialistic determinism ultimately relies on a philosophical claim. The claim that science encompasses and accounts for all of reality is a claim that cannot be verified by the scientific method itself. Similarly, science, in the end, cannot account for itself.

Albert Einstein understood that his desire to do physics originated from somewhere else besides quantum-physics equations. He said "the cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest driving force behind science." He also said, echoing Kant, that "science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind." Joshua Lederberg, the Nobel Prize evolutionary biologist, recently told *Science* magazine: "Nothing so far disproves the divine. What is incontrovertible is that a religious impulse guides our motive in sustaining scientific inquiry."

My quarrel, I hope it is clear, is not with science per se: not with developments in brain-imaging, or depression medications, or I.Q. studies. My quarrel is with a philosophical claim dressing itself up as a "value-neutral" scientific claim. The issue here is not whether what science tells us is true, important, or meaningful. Rather, the issue is whether it is the only truth, the only meaningful account of human activity.

Jeremy Bernstein, author of *Quantum Profiles*, recently observed of E. O. Wilson and various other sociobiologists that they think that all phenomena are to be explained in terms ultimately reductionist; that a "bewildering array of data is a set of units obeying laws that often display a remarkable mathematical elegance. In physics, the reduction goes down to the quark, which is the modern physicists' atom. In evolutionary biology, it goes down to the gene and its component molecules."

But biology is not readily reducible to physics. As Bernstein notes, electrons don't have biographies; genes (and people) do. Critical to understanding the evolution of genes is knowing something of that evolutionary story, and such storytelling is not a part of a physicist's account of the ultimate particles and forces.

Even more storytelling is necessary to account for human life. I may know my biological makeup; I may know a great deal about how that makeup evolved; I may even see that I am "hard-wired" to a certain degree. But are these accounts all there is to what I am? Is that all there is? I may know that the brain processes the "booming buzzing confusion" of the senses, but what matters to me as well is whether I should pursue the kind of life I have; whether I should marry, whether I should raise children, whether I should devote my life to God, whether I should sacrifice my life for these or those ideals. However popular, however exciting, however flattering to us, the scientific materialist account falls short. It provides an account of human life. But it does not, and never will, provide a full account.

A group of neuroscientists recently compared the brains of sixteen healthy 10- to 18-year-olds with those of healthy adults. They found that young people had much greater activity in the part of the brain that plays a key role in instinctual reaction, the amygdala, than in the frontal lobe, the part involved in rational thought. The comments from the researchers, reported in the *Washington Post*, are instructive: "'These results . . . show age-related physiological changes in the brains of adolescents which may help explain the emotionally turbulent years,' says Professor Yurelun-Todd."

So according to this account, science has found that adolescents react more with emotion than rationality. It has said it understands "emotional turbulence." Well . . . well done. We have learned something here, obviously. But, again, is that all there is? Is that the best there is?

We learn quite a bit—we learn *more*—about the souls of human teenagers (and yes, they exist) from *Romeo and Juliet*. Act II, Scene 6: Romeo comes to Friar Lawrence's cell to meet Juliet and be married by the Good Friar. Here's Romeo:

But come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy
That one short minute give me in her sight.
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare—
It is enough I may but call her mine.

To which, Friar Lawrence responds:

These violent delights have violent ends
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately: long love doth so;
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

Amygdala? Frontal lobe? Okay. But Shakespeare, too, is knowing and worth knowing.

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OPEN MIND OVER MATTER

Saul Bellow, in his 1976 Nobel Prize Address, observes that the reductive pictures of man in the age of science "no more resemble us than we resemble the reconstructed reptiles and other monsters in a museum of paleontology. We are much more limber, versatile, better articulated, there is much more to us—we all feel it." We have, he goes on to say, "an immense, painful longing for a broader, more flexible, fuller, more coherent, more comprehensive account of what we human beings are, who we are, and what this life is for."

It is this quest for a "more flexible, more comprehensive account" of ourselves that defines the human condition. And it is one that demands of us an openness to the many dimensions of human experience. By ruling out a priori those accounts not expressible in the causal theories of science, we truncate inquiry—just as we would if we failed to pursue scientific knowledge out of fear that our basic religious beliefs would be threatened. Both block inquiry, both block man—his spirit, his mind, his work.

I believe man is best pictured in the theistic traditions. The world is a created world. The doctrine of creatio ex nihilo expresses not a scientific causal assertion but a view of the human world that affirms our striving. It is both an affirmation of our hopes and a reminder of our fears.

Those hopes cannot be fulfilled, as those fears cannot be answered, by science alone. The questions that must be asked are hard. But as the American philosopher Josiah Royce reminds us, asking such questions does have its point: "It is difficult to wrestle with angels, but there are some blessings that can't be won in any other way." **NR**

The Dangerous Korea

The current North Korean regime guarantees crisis after crisis.

NICHOLAS EBERSTADT

ONCE again, the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea"—a.k.a. the DPRK or North Korea—has been getting itself into the news. And since Pyongyang's principal export to the rest of the world is headaches, the news naturally has not been good.

At the end of August, North Korea demonstrated that it had joined the handful of states that can produce a multi-stage ballistic rocket—by launching one, without warning, over the main island of Japan. Although Pyongyang subsequently insisted that it was only trying to send a music satellite aloft to celebrate two imminent joyous events—the regime's 50th anniversary and the formal accession to supreme power of Kim Jong Il, son and heir to the late Kim Il Sung—analysts less caught up in the spirit of those festivities noted that the reach of DPRK weapons of mass destruction (including what may be the world's third-largest arsenal of chemical weapons) had just been ominously extended.

In addition to presiding over a clandestine missile-development program, the DPRK also happens to have been presiding over a clandestine famine. For over three years—since a 1995 DPRK international appeal for emergency food aid—Western governments and U.N. agencies have shipped hundreds of millions of dollars in relief supplies to North Korea to mitigate a hunger crisis whose precise dimensions Pyongyang has steadfastly refused to disclose. But by stubbornly restricting information about, and access to, stricken areas and vulnerable groups, the North Korean regime has fundamentally compromised the ability of these foreign donors to pursue their humanitarian mandate. By September, Doctors Without Borders—the private, highly respected worldwide charitable organization—could bear that situation no longer: it announced that it was shutting down all its operations in the DPRK at the end of the month.

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In addition to presiding over a clandestine missile-development program, the DPRK is presiding over a clandestine famine.

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And then there is the matter of the "suspect underground facility." Back in 1994, after two years of intermittent international drama over its nuclear program, Pyongyang signed an "Agreed Framework" with Washington that seemed to promise a permanent halt to the DPRK's nuclear-development (read: atomic-weapons) efforts in return for a schedule of benefits, including up to half a million tons of free heavy-fuel oil every year and the concessional construction on North Korean soil of two "safe" light-water nuclear reactors worth well over $4 billion. In mid-August, however, the *New York Times* reported that the U.S. intelligence community had detected "a huge secret underground complex in North Korea" that might be "the centerpiece of an effort to revive the country's . . . nuclear weapons program."

American entreaties for immediate inspections of this subterranean site were greeted first by escalating demands and then by not-so-veiled threats. When U.S. diplomats raised the issue last summer, their North Korean counterparts reportedly agreed in principle to inspection—but wanted $300 million in cash if that inspection failed to uncover suspect activities. In later discussions, their position hardened: $300 million up front, and for a one-time-only peek.

At this writing, a North Korean Foreign Ministry delegation is shuttling between New York and Washington, listening to

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continued warnings from State Department officials that the "Agreed Framework"—already highly unpopular in Congress—will be a dead letter without complete DPRK cooperation in resolving the unanswered questions about this new complex. So far, though, Pyongyang has not exactly been responding cooperatively. On December 4, the daily paper for the ruling North Korean Worker's Party declared that

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North Korean officials occupy a universe with ideological and metaphysical coordinates very different from our own.

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American agitation for inspecting the underground facility signified that "the United States has set out to execute 'Operation 5027'"—the Pentagon's (defensive) contingency plan for a war in the Korean peninsula. That same day, a spokesman for the general staff of the North Korean "People's Army" suggested that "preemptive strike" was "by no means an exclusive option of the United States. The mode of strike is not a monopoly of the U.S., either." Lest the point be missed, another officer went on to state that if conflict breaks out, "Neither the U.S. territory nor Japanese islands will remain without a mishap." (Remember the launch of that musical satellite?)

Thus we may well ask: Do these various developments indicate that Washington is confronted by a new North Korean crisis? That, of course, depends on what you mean by "crisis."

If by "crisis" we mean a confrontation that threatens to heighten the level of international hostility, tension, and anxiety, the answer is obviously yes. If, on the other hand, we mean an unstable state of affairs in which a single decision by one of the drama's main actors may set events in motion that none will later be able to control, the answer is rather less self-evident.

White-knuckle, bared-fang negotiations present the observer steeped in modern, Western sensibilities with prima facie evidence of an inherently explosive condition. Yet for better or worse, that sensibility is not shared by North Korean decision-makers, who occupy a universe with ideological, cultural, and metaphysical coordinates very different from our own. Indeed: One may even argue that high-tension, gut-wrenching brinkmanship is regarded by the DPRK's leadership as the natural approach to international relations. Certainly it is a manner of conduct for which five decades of North Korean diplomacy has revealed a strong preference.

Frederick H. Carlson

Foreign observers understand amazingly little about this desperate, heavily armed state. In part, this is testimony to the success of Pyongyang's longstanding campaign to cloak North Korea in total secrecy—not least to conceal the regime's capabilities and intentions from its adversaries. But it also speaks to the precepts upon which that state has been built—precepts that, to the sophisticated internationalist worldview, seem antique or otherwise utterly alien.

"Socialism with Korean characteristics." Whatever can that mean?

Perhaps, for one thing, a Leninism in which there can be no winners unless there are also identifiable, dominated losers. Perhaps, also, an obsessive focus on race (the Korean word is *minjok*) and on racial destiny.

The same September 1998 DPRK Supreme People's Assembly that formally elevated Kim Jong Il also proclaimed that North Korea should be a "prosperous and powerful socialist state." A pity that Washington—replete as it is these days with semioticians—has not yet harnessed those considerable talents to parse that phrase.

Americans who have pored over English-language translations of DPRK official pronouncements have noted the frequency with which the peculiar term "flunkeyism"—a word of utmost opprobrium—is used. That word, however, is the official DPRK translation of a well-known Korean term, *sadaejuui*, meaning the doctrine of "serving the great" observed by ancient Korean kingdoms, under which regular tribute to China (the great power of the old East Asian order) was ideologically justified. The DPRK's current official state philosophy is the late Kim Il Sung's *juche*-thought: and *juche* may be seen as "flunkeyism" stood on its head. No longer (by this interpretation of the current doctrine) will North Korean money flow to the Great Powers: instead, the Great Powers will proffer gifts to Pyongyang—and those gifts will be received not as charity, but rather as tribute to the sole legitimate (socialist) throne of the Korean race.

STARVE THE STATE

If such an analysis roughly describes the viewpoint of the interlocutors with whom Americans must contend, how should our policymakers proceed? Here are four modest suggestions.

First, while Americans may have a deep moral preference for feeding the North Korean people in this time of travail, they should have no similar disposition for nourishing the North Korean state. For this reason, the current arrangement for food relief to North Korea—in essence, cutting checks to Pyongyang's "Public Distribution System"—should be absolutely unacceptable. If lives of ordinary North Korean citizens are to be saved, what might be called "intrusive aid" is indispensable. Unless and until intrusive aid can proceed unhindered in that country, no taxpayer funds should be devoted to that project.

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Second, the "Agreed Framework" should be recognized for what it is: an ambiguous and mischievous document ripe for misuse. The American negotiators who hammered it out have repeatedly emphasized that it is not an "agreement"—that it does not bind any party to specific actions or hold parties in non-compliance if given objectives are not met. "Failure" of the "Agreed Framework," consequently, is very much in the mind of the beholder. And if the "Agreed Framework" should "fail," it is not self-evident that the dilemmas posed by coping with North Korean policy objectives will have been altered in any material way. Washington must therefore be reconciled to live with the fundamental tensions that separate American world interests from those of Pyongyang.

Third, isolated as the DPRK regime may be, American policymakers should appreciate that Pyongyang follows the international news. American actions—and inaction—in distant locales affect Pyongyang's calculations, as well as its articulation of its international position. America's response (or lack of one), for example, to the continuing provocations of an all-but-impotent Serbian state and a hamstrung Iraqi state, along with Washington's flaccid reaction to Libya's defiant refusal to expose its state-sponsored terrorists to international justice, have surely informed North Korea's current negotiating tactics.

Finally, we should recognize that the essence of the "North Korean crisis" is in fact the North Korean regime: its outlook, behavior, and intentions. The North Korean crisis will continue to capture headlines until the DPRK undergoes a basic transformation—or until that state disappears from the world stage. For this reason, any prudent North Korean policy must be a long-term one—and must prepare for, and encourage, the evolution of a Northeast Asia that no longer need contend with an actor like the present North Korean government. **NR**

It Says Here . . .

Christmas with ten children and two parents.

ALOÏSE BUCKLEY HEATH

YOU know that house where, the night before Christmas, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse? Well, that wasn't our house. That was a house where mamma in her kerchief and papa in his cap could settle their brains for a long winter's nap because they knew good and well that St. Nicholas was about to come down the chimney with a bound and do absolutely everything.

A Christmas story by the late Aloïse Buckley Heath is an NR tradition. The collection *Will Mrs. Major Go to Hell?*, in which this and Mrs. Heath's other Christmas stories appear, is available from National Review Books.

It may come as a surprise to many people, but the fact is, St. Nicholas doesn't do one blessed thing for the Heath family. At our house—and I wouldn't want this mentioned in front of just anybody—Santa Claus is really Ben and me; and the period during which not a creature is stirring, not even a mouse, lasts roughly from 4:10 A.M. to 5:00 A.M. By six o'clock, actually, you couldn't call what goes on in our house "stirring."

You know the family that gathers round the hearth on Christmas Eve while Father re-reads the beloved *A Christmas Carol*? Firelight flickering on absorbed little faces? Baby dropping off to sleep on Mother's shoulder? Well, that's not our family, and I bet you guessed.

ASLOSH WITH TRADITIONS

I hope I'm not giving anyone the impression that Ben and I are not respecters of tradition, because the fact is that we're simply aslosh with traditions. We always sing Christmas carols after dinner; we always hang our stockings on the mantelpiece; we always set out cookies and milk for Santa Claus, but we just don't have the time to listen to Ben read *A Christmas Carol*. We have a substitute tradition: we give Janet and Timothy a half-teaspoon of liquid phenobarbital, Jennifer, Betsey, and Alison a teaspoon, and Buckley, Priscilla, and John two teaspoons each. (We've had to keep the two eldest off the stuff these past two years; they have to stay alert.)

Then we send 16-year-old Jim, who has a voice like a bull calf, into the living-room with the big children and make *him* read Dickens's beloved *A Christmas Carol*; and 14-year-old Pam, who has such a sharp eye and a quick hand that she can whack a small bottom while its owner is still wondering which trespass to commit, takes the peewees into the nursery to hear Clement C. Moore's beloved "A Visit from St. Nicholas."

Ben and I refill the coffee pot and proceed forthwith to the furnace room, which is where *we* spend Christmas Eve. Not by choice, you understand—if we had a choice, we'd watch *Amahl and the Night Visitors* or take a walk or something—but because the furnace room is the only one in our house in which you can a) store 167 different items, ranging from aeroplane: gasoline-powered to Zig-Zag Puzzle Map; and also b) lock.

Nine out of ten of these items, you understand, have to be organized or set up or assembled, and a good many of them have to be either re-constructed or re-designed from scratch. All of them must be fully understood if Christmas morning is not to shrill with the sad cry of: "What's all that stuff supposed to *be*?" and "The box says Astro-Dyno Jet, but it's just a bunch of iron sticks!" or "I'll never be able to play with that. The directions have too-long words!" All of which leaves Ben and me with the choice of working in the living-room after the last child is asleep—and when you have ten children that means never—or spending Christmas Eve in the furnace room.

The furnace room is rather peaceful, actually. By the time we've opened the boxes and laid out the hammer, saw, screwdrivers, wrenches, pliers, files, glue, rubber cement, safety pins, needles and thread, toothpicks for stiffening tabs that won't go into slots, crochet hooks and rubber bands for putting dolls' arms back on, Mercurochrome, Band-Aids, tranquilizers, Benzedrine, phenobarbital, aspirin, and a dictionary, we hardly even notice the furnace, which has a way of breathing like a

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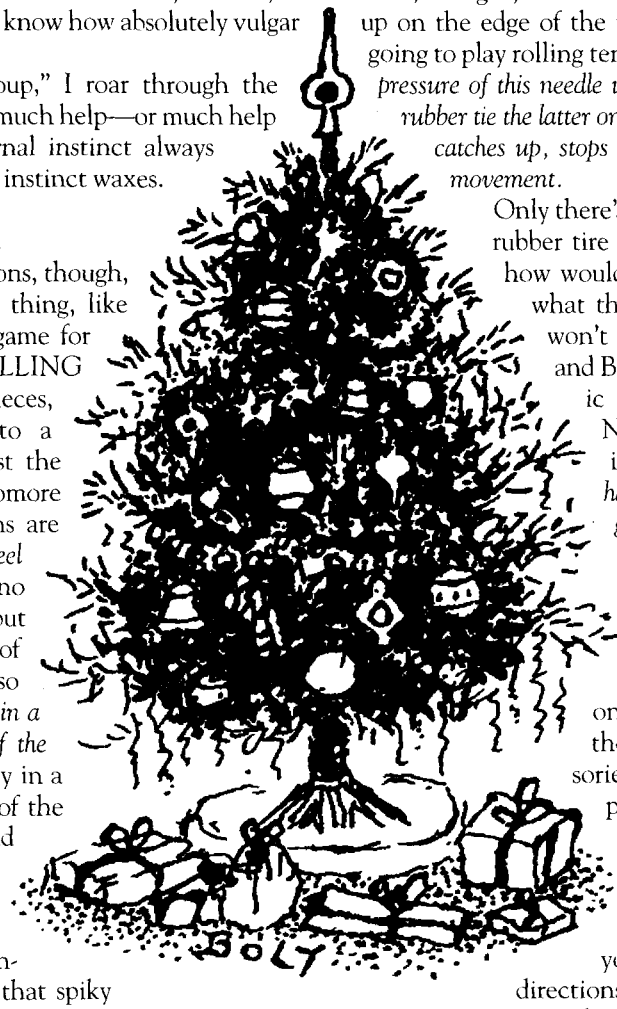
dinosaur with croup. Jim's voice, bellowing, "Sit DOWN, Buckley," or, "I said QUIET," filters down to us in a soft murmur; and since the nursery is on the third floor and Pam's energy is limited, she clatters down only every now and then to tell us that Alison is blowing into Jay's ear and blaming it on Betsey, or that Alison keeps sticking her feet under Timothy and pinching him with her toes, or that Alison keeps muttering "moon on the *breast* of the new-fallen snow, moon on the *breast* of the new-fallen snow" and making the others laugh and act silly . . . "Well, she *thinks* it's a bad word, Mother, or she wouldn't bother to say it. You know how absolutely vulgar Alison is."

"Send her down to Jim's group," I roar through the screws in my mouth, which isn't much help—or much help to Jim, anyway—but my maternal instinct always seems to wane as my mechanical instinct waxes.

If you could call it an instinct.

If you could call it mechanical.

I do know some of my limitations, though, so I always start with a simple thing, like "ROLLING TENNIS: A new game for home fun," for instance. ROLLING TENNIS has only about six pieces, which is practically boring to a woman who was on Dean's List the entire first semester of her sophomore year at college. The instructions are nice and short, too. *The elastic steel needle*, they begin . . . (There's no elastic steel needle in the box, but the nearest thing to it is a kind of hard, spiky thing that bends, so that must be what) *must be kept in a way that it sits up on the edge of the table*. The trouble is, it won't stay in a way that it sits up on the edge of the table unless I hold it there, and surely the ROLLING TENNIS people couldn't mean that, could they? They don't really mean for me to spend the declining years of my life holding up that spiky thing! Do they realize that I have ten children? That I'm 43 years old? Well, of course they do. There's some perfectly simple thing that I've overlooked.



"Ben, it says here . . . " I begin.

"First things first," mumbles Ben, who is engaged in his annual re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the electric train, which he always can't understand something in the transformer of. I don't tell him that if he'd leave the train *up* all year round he and the transformer wouldn't have to go through this every Christmas Eve. I don't tell him because it's too early. This is what I tell him around 2:00 A.M., and I'm a stickler for tradition.

Anyway, it's time to check everybody's teeth (and to tell Alison for the last time that sticking her toothbrush under the faucet doesn't fool *me* for one minute) and to hear everybody's prayers (and to tell Alison for the last time that beating everybody else to the "Amen" is *not* praying) and to kiss everybody goodnight (and to kiss Alison twice and tell her I love her anyway, which is the simple truth). On my way down I hear the baby calling "H-e-ere, Mudda! Here, boy! *Come* on!" and since I train her in obedience—you can never begin too young, I always think—I obey, and we have a little chat and a little rock and a little back rub until she falls asleep again.

By the time I get back to the furnace room Ben has had time to accomplish a great deal, and I feel much better about everything, even ROLLING TENNIS.

So, all right, I will hold the spiky thing in a way that it sits up on the edge of the table. It's not as if the children were going to play rolling tennis eight hours a day! Now: *By a slight pressure of this needle upon the axis of the runner fitted with a rubber tie the latter one begins to move, the other player swiftly catches up, stops it to run, and jerks back with the same movement.*

Only there's no runner. There is a rod with a little rubber tire at each end, but if that's the runner, how would I press its axis? Anyhow, an axis is what things *turn* on, isn't it? I know it is; I won't even look it up; and it's nine o'clock and Ben has started to fiddle with that idiotic transformer again. ROLLING TENNIS will simply have to wait till he finishes. At least I know the rules. *He who has won a point plays last, but in a new game it is the last loser who plays first.*

YOUR FRIENDLY CORNER STORE

I pull out Your Friendly Corner Store. This is more my type, and besides it has a diagram which not only illustrates and labels Parts A to X of the Corner Store, but also its accessories. "Telephone," it tells you, under a picture of a telephone. "Cord." "Cash register." "Your Friendly Corner Store sign."

"Check off each step as you complete it," they warn you (and show you how—like this ☒) and "Follow all directions step by step." I never was a leader, anyhow, so I start right in. *Step 1.* ☐ *From the white side of the board press out all excess fireboard from all slots, notches and edges so that all the parts look like those in the kit drawings. Punch out holes for screws with a sharp pencil point.* ☐ *Place parts in alphabetic order.* My Friendly Corner Store and I are not so friendly as we used to be, by the time I finish Step 1. I feel they have not been quite straight with me. They clearly implied that there was only one ☐ to a step, but, I now note, there are seven ☐s in Step 10, alone.

"Ben, look at this. It says here . . . "

"There's no point in getting mad about it," says Ben, who has made up with the transformer, solved ROLLING TENNIS (they meant "axle," not "axis," if that means anything to you), and is happily assembling some Thermo-Turbo thing without so much as a glance at the directions.

"Who's mad?" I snarl. Setting up the Corner Store involves pushing 78 stupid little slots, and I know from experience that

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at the slightest sign of irritation on my part the tabs will turn into 78 sulky little bits of tissue paper. I grit my teeth and plod on. By the time I finish Step 12 (49 □s later) Ben has put together the bicycle, the tricycle, the tractor, both doll carriages, the doll's house and the Walker Wagon. He is about to begin the electric hockey game when he discovers the instructions are in French. He hands me the instructions.

I can read French all right, but who knows what a *filet des buts* is, for heaven's sake, or a *casier pour pile sèche*, or a *vis à métal*, except maybe a French electrician. I go upstairs for the Larousse. (*I* know; but I don't think a French dictionary should necessarily be an integral part of Christmas Eve, not even at our house.) When I let myself back into the furnace room Ben looks at me for the first time this evening and blanches.

"Are you going to church like that?"

"Like what?" I answer huffily. And rhetorically.

Ben holds the Dreamy Dressing Table mirror up to my face. "It's 11:30," he says, and I tear up the stairs again.

Midnight Mass clears the crossness out of me. Priscilla goes with us this year, along with John and Pam and Jim; and as I watch them come back from Communion they look so solemn and young and tired and beautiful that my heart almost bursts. My heart almost bursts until I kiss them "Merry Christmas" in the cold starlight outside the church, and they refuse, with cries of revulsion, to kiss each other. Then my heart shrivels right back to normal.

Still, the furnace room *is* an anti-climax.

By 1:30, Ben and I are getting ruthless. When we find that the assembly instructions for John's cuckoo clock take up a 16-page booklet and begin: "Look what we have here!! What fun!! It's all the parts that go to make a real-as-life BLACK FOREST CUCKOO CLOCK!!" we clap the cover right back on the box and agree to pretend we thought he wanted a do-it-yourself cuckoo clock. We give up on the Corner Store after we notice that, besides the 19 Steps on the front of the instruction sheet, there are an additional 33 on the back. Anyhow, Betsey hasn't mentioned that Corner Store in weeks.

By 2:15 the B-52 Turret Gun, the Helicopter-Bomber, the Kookie Kitchen, the weight-lifting set, and the puppet theater are assembled and upstairs; by 3:00 we've finished the musical rocking chair, the robot lady, the Sonar set, the fire engine, the weather station, the Yakkity-Yob, and we've even found out how to make the Kissy dolls kiss. By 3:45 every last item is complete and in the living-room; the Christmas list has been recovered from the rubble on the furnace-room floor, and we're ready to distribute. That is, Ben arranges artistic exhibits and I sit on the floor stuffing Christmas stockings and tell him where artistically to arrange them.

"No, not there, honey: the Winchester rifle is Alison's. Put it on the desk with the Hedda-Get-Bedda doll . . . That Chubby Checker album goes with Pam's stuff, Ben. Right over there—by the lounging pyjamas. The Mass in B Minor is John's—in the corner, sweetie! With the lie detector and the minerology set." Or: ". . . Ben, he's not even four years *old*! And anyhow, couldn't we thrash this out some other time? . . . All right, all right, but just for now would you *please* put that Kissy doll under the piano with Timothy's dump truck?"

■

As I watch the children come back from Communion, my heart almost bursts.

■

And finally we're through. We thumbtack a sheet across the entrance to the living-room and tiptoe upstairs to hang stockings on children's bedposts. Ben takes those for the children who don't believe in Santa Claus, because if they wake up they'll know it's only Daddy with the stockings; and I take those for the children who do, because if they wake up, they'll know it's only Mother.

At 4:10, in the black dark of the upstairs hall, I tiptoe round a corner into Ben, tiptoeing from the opposite direction. I gasp and clutch him.

"It's only Santa Claus."

"Oh, Ben," I sigh, too tired even to move away from his cheek, which feels like a cactus patch. "What will we ever do when the children are grown up?" **NR**

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HELP!!!!

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NO, NO, TEMPTRESS! OH, MY WILLPOWER! I MUST ATTEND TO THE NEEDS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE! HAVE MERCY!!!
...NOT UNTIL YOU GET ME A HIGH-PAYING PRIVATE SECTOR JOB!
...I KNEW THEY COULDN'T FILL UP TWO DAYS WITH A DEFENSE...

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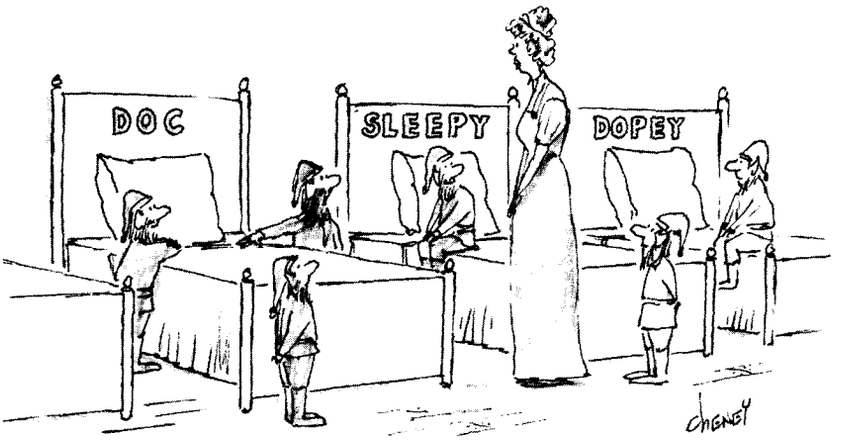
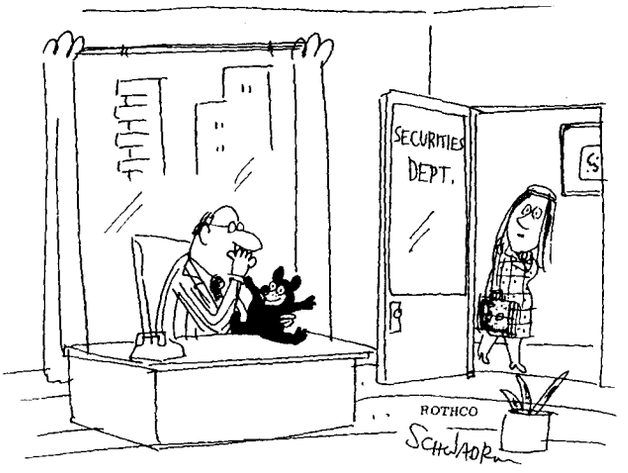
"Some junior ministers have criticized your over-simplified response to the frog issue."



"You can have this bed. He's in prison for assisting with a suicide."

"I know everything is futile, but what good would it do to give up?"



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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 13, 1998

Dear Rusty,
Tipper and I, year after year,
Compose a poem to spread Holiday Cheer—
That's "Holiday" as in "not religion-specific";
Whatever you celebrate—we think it's terrific.
Kwanzaa, pagan, Gaia, or Druid—
The whole concept of Christmas is remarkably fluid.

But at Holiday time we turn into bores
To let you know what's up with the Gores.

The kids are great—thriving as ever.
They seem to excel in every endeavor.
The girls, of course, have always been scholars,
Little Al though needed to be grabbed by the collar
And put in his place, in front of a book.
But lately he's found an academic hook
And turned into the inquisitive sort—
He can recite whole sections of the Ken Starr Report.

Tipper and I, as you know, are doing okay,
Though we watch CNN with increasing dismay.
It's all anyone talks about—this perjury rap,
The impeachment vote, the censure trap.
Just last night, a guy asked on TV
Whether Bill should resign if he contracted VD.
We should be talking about foreign affairs,
But these days it's hard to find someone who cares.
But why would you ask Zbigniew Brzezinsky?
So it's an Impeachment Christmas? A Hanukkah Lewinsky?

But enough of our griping! Enough caterwauling!
Let's divvy up the wishes we've spent a year hauling.

To Hillary Clinton, who has been a good friend,
We say (wink, wink), Enjoy the UN.

A New Year Happy and a Christmas Merry
To the brave and thoughtful Senator Kerrey!

That's the one with an "e"—the one who's not running.
The one without one is a little more cunning—
From Massachusetts, he hasn't decided,
Waiting, I guess, 'til impeachment's subsided.
And then, right before he's about to start
He'll give a speech and mention his damn Purple Heart
Maybe twenty times in very short order—
Like I wasn't there as an Army reporter?
Still, I know that he finds
Campaigning is easy when you marry a Heinz—
A Lear Jet is roomy, your shirt has no creases,
And there's plenty of dough for direct-mail hit pieces.

(To him we give some free advice:
You're pretty lefty, so if you roll the dice,
Remember that you'll just be splittin' a faction
With the very unsinkable Rev. Jesse L. Jackson.)

But it's Holiday time! A time for cheer!
Not for political foes, but friends so dear—
To the tallest, greatest, gal that we know,
A garland of holly to deck Janet Reno!
As if she could ever in a million years be cuter
Than when she said, "No Special Prosecutor."
An "internally conducted inquiry" instead?
Ring her with lights! Put a star on her head!

And let me just say, at the end of this rhyme,
To my wife I've been faithful—yes, all of the time
And in every which way, she to me too.
(Though if the rumors are true,
We can't say the same, sadly,
For presidential candidate
Dollar Bill Bradley.)
That's all from us. That's our bushel of cheer—
To you and yours, to what you hold dear,
We wish you the best, good food and good wine,
A happy, healthy, ninety-nine.

Your pal, Al

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Atlantic Empires

MICHAEL LIND

The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, Civil Warfare, and the Triumph of Anglo-America, by Kevin Phillips (Basic, 707 pp., $30)

AS the beginning of the third millennium approaches, the hegemony of Anglo-American culture for the moment faces no challenge. As a result of the global conflicts of the twentieth century, the United States has replaced the British Empire as the leading global military, industrial, and financial power, and English is the *lingua franca* of elites across the planet. *The Cousins' Wars* is, in the words of its author, "a book about how three great internal wars seeded each other and, in so doing, guided not only politics but the rise of Anglo-America from a small Tudor kingdom to a global community and world hegemony."

The subject may seem a surprising choice for Kevin Phillips. A political analyst and commentator, he has shown a remarkable ability to discern emergent trends in American politics in the electoral tea leaves. Here he unites his recent interest in worldwide political patterns with his long-standing interest in the details of our own country's domestic affairs to produce his magnum opus.

Seven hundred pages long, overflowing with statistics, crowded with charts and maps, yet written in conversational prose, this is the kind of sweeping, provocative history for the general reader that American academics once wrote.

Mr. Lind is the Washington editor of *Harper's Magazine* and a senior fellow at the New America Foundation.

Detail of Benjamin West's *Death of General Wolfe* (1770)

The Cousins' Wars is, in effect, two books. One is a thick book examining the links between three Anglo-American revolutions—the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, the American Revolution, and the American Civil War. The other is a slim essay seeking to explain why the two-headed entity of Anglo-America achieved global dominance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As to the first subject, the notion that the American Civil War was another round in the conflict between Puritan "Roundheads" and southern "Cavaliers" is a cliché, but one with a kernel of truth, according to Phillips. The English Civil War pitted "Cavaliers with Celtic allies versus Puritan England"; the U.S. Civil War pitted "Cavaliers with Southern Celtic stock allies and Northern Irish sympathizers against Yankee Greater New England." A similar pattern manifested itself in seventeenth-century North America during the English Civil War, as Puritan New England supported Cromwell and Cavalier Virginia became a refuge for royalists.

Phillips has more difficulty fitting the American Revolution into this schema. After all, in 1776 the New England "Roundheads" and most of the southern "Cavaliers," who had been opponents during the English Revolution and who would be adversaries again during the U.S. Civil War, teamed up against a common enemy—the Crown. Phillips admits that "[t]o call the English Civil War as important as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in laying groundwork for the American Revolution invites controversy." Nevertheless he valiantly shoehorns the southern planters together with the New England Puritans. This requires Phillips to redefine the southerners as "Low Church Anglican country party-turned-Tidewater gentry"—a play on words that permits him to equate southerners with the country squires who supported Cromwell.

One need not agree with all of Phillips's interpretations, however, to profit from his fresh look at both British and American history. Of course, readers will quibble about matters of emphasis or fact. With respect to factual accuracy, a reviewer can only spot-check subjects that he knows well. Phillips's remarkable command of the political geography of my native Texas, from the nineteenth century onward, gives me confidence in his discussion of other regions.

And what Kevin Phillips does not know about American and British elections and civil-war alignments is probably not worth knowing. Several hundred pages into *The Cousins' Wars*, the reader may suspect that this is true of much of what Phillips knows, as well. The careful, state-by-state, county-by-county analysis that Phillips has perfected in analyzing recent American politics tends to dissolve the great trends he is describing into minutiae. At times *The Cousins' War* makes one imagine a mural in the Capitol dome

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done in the painstaking *pointilliste* style of Georges Seurat.

The pace picks up when Phillips turns to his second theme, that "England's expansion into North America, following the political unification of the British Isles, was the decisive fact of the modern world." Phillips connects the stories of the Anglo-American civil wars with the rise to global predominance of Anglo-American civilization by speculating on the consequences of the "cousins' wars" for both Britain and the United States. According to Phillips, "The First [British] Empire, [which was] Whig-built, English in ethnic origin, Low Church Protestant in religion," gave way to "the Second British Empire, which looked east to India."

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What Kevin Phillips does not know about American and British elections is probably not worth knowing.

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Writes Phillips, "The First Empire had really been English." But not so the Second Empire. "Irish and Highlanders might garrison it, Scots might manage its banks or design its bridges, but the imperial subject population was largely non-British—and colorfully non-English." As the center of gravity of the empire shifted from North America to Asia, the center of gravity in British ideology shifted to the aristocratic Right—and "England" was redefined as "Britain."

Phillips finds parallels in the newly independent United States. Political power shifted from post-Puritan New England to the Tidewater southern planter elite and its Scots-Irish allies, who pursued a policy of expansion into Indian territory and Latin America comparable to the Second British Empire's growth in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

If Phillips is to be believed, the U.S. Civil War in both the U.S. and Britain reversed these shifts in dominance. The success of the Union armies empowered the Republican post-Puritan Greater New England, while inspiring the British working and middle classes and Low Church Protestant reformers—and demoralizing aristocrats who sympathized with the defeated southern ruling class. "Instead of Americans circa 1775 seeking the rights and liberties of Englishmen, the interaction had come full circle: Englishmen were looking to the cousins' wars to secure them the rights and liberties of Americans."

Without "demographic and linguistic imperialism," Phillips writes, "Anglo-America would have been much smaller and weaker. Gaelic might still be a major language in the British Isles and Greater Germany might have become the twentieth-century colossus of the West." Along with the North American Indians, the great losers in the story of the rise of Anglo-America, Phillips argues, were Ireland and Germany. In 1541, Ireland had almost half the population of England and Wales; by 1900, England had seven times the Irish population. Without planning to, the United States reinforced English predominance in the British Isles by absorbing enormous numbers of Irish immigrants.

The U.S. performed a similar service in behalf of Britain's position in the world by digesting much of the planet's German population. "One can only surmise how different the industrial and military outcomes of the twentieth century could have been had the 25 to 30 million German-Americans of 1917 or 1941 still remained in Europe or had they controlled a German-flavored Upper Mississippi Valley Confederation created in an 1860s break-up of the previous United States." Despite a significant degree of German-American (and Irish-American) resentment of the Anglo-American wars against Germany, the bids for hegemony of the Kaiser and Hitler were defeated thanks largely to American forces commanded by officers with names like Pershing (Pfoerschin), Nimitz, and Eisenhower.

Phillips's analysis leads one to wonder whether the twenty-first century will see the reversal of the centuries-long ascendancy of the Puritan tradition in both the U.K. and the U.S. If the spinning off of Britain's constituent parts results in the replacement of the United Kingdom by a multinational federation, an English nation-state might find itself hemmed in to the west and north by new Celtic nation-states—and subordinated to Germany, the dominant nation in the European Union. In the United States, demographic trends will continue to strengthen the Cavalier/Celtic South at the expense of post-Puritan Greater New England. (Between 1990 and 1996, the South led with 46 per cent of the country's total population growth.) The English Puritans and their American cousins may have done more than any other groups to shape the modern world, but their historic rivals the Celts, Germans, and southerners may inherit it.

In *The Cousins' Wars*, Kevin Phillips applies his trademark brand of scholarship to a subject grander than any he has treated before, with results that are always thought-provoking and frequently convincing. It is easy to be interesting; it is much more difficult to be faithful to the facts. It is a measure of Phillips's achievement that he so often manages to be both. **NR**

This Will Hurt

D. KEITH MANO

At Home with the Marquis de Sade, by Francine du Plessix Gray (Simon & Schuster, 491 pp., $25)

AS Albert Camus wrote in *The Rebel*: "The history and tragedy of our era really begin with [Sade]. . . . Our times have blended, in a curious manner, his dream of a universal republic and his technique of degradation" (ellipses provided by Francine du Plessix Gray). Sade's technique was predominantly theatrical. He had always wanted to be a playwright, not a lowly pornographer, and, as a result, his erotic fantasies never seem quite real, being

Mr. Mano's new novel, *The Fergus Dialogues*, is available from International Scholars Publications, in Bethesda, Md.

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at some level *tableaux vivants* or stage effects that depend on lighting and costume for their passion.

The 1770s in France, like the 1960s in America, were performed, not lived. Even Sade's private carousing went public. After his first scandal (whipping a prostitute and forcing her to whip him), Sade was placed under close surveillance by Paris police inspector Louis Marais. For more than a decade, reports of Sade's sexual activity were passed on daily to Versailles and became "the highest source of delectation for the king and Mme de Pompadour."

There was sadism before Sade, of course. (Havelock Ellis first used the term in 1895 to describe clinically a pain-fear-shame syndrome so commonplace today that "sadistic" theme restaurants have been developed in New York.) Sade himself was probably masochistic—a word derived from the noted sexual submissive, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. Sade, in fact, comes across as a rather harmless sexual partner. Evidently, because of a genital malformation, he found it difficult to achieve orgasm without the aid of powerful and violent imagery. Sade loathed the idea of capital punishment. And he only once committed adultery with a married woman—patronizing prostitutes and loose servant women instead—so deep was his reverence for marriage.

The Marquis de Sade always wanted to be a playwright, not a lowly pornographer.

Sado-masochism had been common, almost "banal," throughout Louis XV's reign. Gray makes a persuasive case for blaming the epidemic prevalence of this neurotic behavior on Jesuit educational practice, which emphasized public whipping and "lavish theatrical productions." Sade was also profoundly influenced by the Jesuit attitude toward confession. "Throughout his life, Sade would resort to a typically Jesuitic form of casuistry to justify the abundance of crimes and debauches limned in his fictions: he defended them as indispensable to our deeper knowledge of the human heart." In such a promiscuous era as Sade's the church confessional must have been an ongoing epic of smut.

No pornographic writing, however, has exceeded in horror that most extreme of sado-masochistic events, the Terror. Bondage, humiliation, fear, headless bodies writhing and kicking to the tune of Guillotin's technological executioner—should it surprise anyone that this political orgasm was prefigured and accompanied by the savage, encyclopedic outpourings of a sexual obsessive? Sade was not in the Bastille when it fell. He had been transferred on July 3 for inciting the mob below to riot (he used his urinal as a megaphone). Nevertheless, his lingering presence puts the French Revolution in suitably ironic perspective. This great human occasion succeeds in liberating, among other things, a grossly fat and cantankerous pornographer, whose work—disdained by his contemporaries—would influence Flaubert, Baudelaire, Apollinaire, Buñuel, and Dali, along with the surrealist movement in general.

Sade—son of an aristocratic libertine and an absentee mother—survived the times by turning into an activist republican named Louis Sade. He shot up through the ranks and even got to rename the streets of Paris. But Sade miscalculated in 1793 when he spoke publicly and with great eloquence against religion. Sade had been a devout atheist all his life. The revolution itself was in the business of "de-Christianizing" France. But at just that moment Robespierre declared atheism to be "aristocratic." He put the cult of a supreme being into effect and had Sade arrested once again. Some sort of clerical error would save Sade from suddenly becoming much shorter than his five foot, two inches in height, but it was a close thing. At last, from 1803 to 1814 Sade was imprisoned at the progressive mental asylum of Charenton. There his theatrical productions achieved cult status. The Sade ancestral home at La Coste in Provence is now a tourist attraction.

Occasion for this new biographical effort was given by the discovery of further correspondence between Sade and his long-suffering but loyal wife, Renée Pélagie—hence Gray's folksy title. But this segment of her narrative drags: correspondence with a cranky prisoner seldom scintillates. Meanwhile Gray, who shouldn't be squeamish, has failed to give even one graphic sado-masochistic passage of any length from Sade's oeuvre that would disclose his particular voice and its "icy sobriety." Gray gets an A for research, an A- for style, and a C for courage.

So what, after all, is behind this phenomenon, sado-masochism? The thesis adduced in my new book, *The Fergus Dialogues*, is this: that the fears and ceremonies of "modern" hominid sexuality are not, in fact, primal. The primal fear (which sexuality has been crafted to cover) is that of family cannibalism—the fear of eating or being eaten by someone you love. Famine has been a powerful leitmotif in human evolution. Neurotic sexuality of all kinds (but particularly sado-masochism) comes into being when a species is trying to repress some aspect of cannibalism—the practice of which is common in Sade's erotic works. (Whipping, for instance, remembers the ancestral tenderization of meat that is to be cannibalized.) Sade, who probably guessed nothing about this unconscious subtext, was remarkably open to experience—and to extremes of human behavior that we can learn from, if we dare, even today. **NR**

God's Progress

PATRICK GLYNN

Beside Still Waters: Searching for Meaning in an Age of Doubt, by Gregg Easterbrook (Morrow, 381 pp., $25)

NINETEEN-NINETY-EIGHT has been a breakthrough year in the science–religion debate. "Science Finds God," *Newsweek* trumpeted on its cover in July, and thanks to a series of such articles, as well as several new books, the public is learning what many scientists and theologians have long known—namely, that the new physics has yielded a cosmos surprisingly compatible with religious belief.

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Gregg Easterbrook has been a significant voice in this new discussion, publishing important articles in *Science* and *The New Republic* (where he is a senior editor) on the science–religion question. It is somewhat surprising, then, that the science–religion issue forms only a small part of his focus in *Beside Still Waters*. Easterbrook's aim here is more ambitious—to tackle the whole epic struggle between faith and reason

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Gregg Easterbrook reads the Bible as the story of God's own evolution and growth.

■

and offer a comprehensive new solution.

Like many people who wrestle with religious doubt, Easterbrook seems less perturbed by the claims of scientific rationality than by that other great challenge to belief: the problem of evil. How did a good God manage to create what seems, in many ways, a bad world?

Easterbrook finds the orthodox answers unsatisfactory, rejecting the doctrine of original sin as un-Scriptural and the doctrine of free will as insufficient to account for naturally caused suffering and pain. Rather, he believes the solution lies in discarding what he sees as the mistaken Western belief that God is omnipotent, a claim he views as unsupported by Scripture.

To be sure, the various attributes that Christian theologians have traditionally attached to God—All-powerful, All-knowing, etc. —may owe more to logical extrapolation, and to Greek rationalism, than to biblical revelation. But when Easterbrook speculates that God is a Being somehow subject to the physical laws of the universe, that He can therefore travel no faster than the speed of light, that He may frequently be off visiting other inhabited planets, and that that is why He often seems, as it were, AWOL from earth for hundreds of years at a time, one pauses.

It turns out that Easterbrook's God is not only severely constrained by physical laws like the speed of light; He is also learning on the job. The heart of Easterbrook's case is a reading of Scripture inspired partly by "process theology" and partly by Jack Miles's recent bestseller, *God: A Biography*. Extending Miles's premise, Easterbrook reads the Bible, quite literally, as the story of God's own evolution and growth, a kind of divine *Bildungsroman*. Only gradually, he argues, did God mature from the petulant, wrathful, jealous God of the Old Testament—who destroys thousands with flood and fire and rejoices in the slaughter of Gentile women and children, and smites sinners dead on the spot—into the loving, nonviolent Deity of the New Testament. God, it seems, is evolving along with us.

Most believers will find this faintly Gnostic notion of God unappealing, not to say downright scary. But the question is not whether such a picture of God is consoling, but whether, so far as we can tell, it is true.

Orthodoxy has long had its own answer to the discrepancy between the violent God of the early Old Testament and the more loving God of the New, a doctrine dating back to the time of the Church Fathers: progressive revelation. That is, God revealed himself only gradually to his initially very primitive chosen people. It is not God who is evolving in the Bible, but the human understanding of God. The God of the earliest books of the Old Testament still has many of the attributes of the pagan deities. By the time of the prophetic books, especially Isaiah, the vision of the divine is more sophisticated—and more in line with what emerges in the New Testament, where God is finally identified with love.

Progressive revelation seems to fit better with the available facts. For one thing, it rests on a less naïve and literal-minded reading of these ancient, opaque, and highly figurative texts. (Easterbrook, though often a sharp interpreter, sometimes reads Biblical tales as if they were stories off the AP wire.) For example, in the Old Testament, God is said to relish the aroma of animals burned for sacrifice. In the New Testament, Jesus rejects this practice, creatively misquoting Scripture to say, "I desire compassion and not a sacrifice."

Which seems more likely, that God had a nose for burning flesh and outgrew it? Or that animal sacrifice was a primitive form of worship that God eventually sought to wean humanity away from, when the time was right? To offer an analogy: My wife and I have a tomcat, George, who deposits an eviscerated chipmunk on our doorstep every few weeks, apparently as an offering. While we appreciate the thought, needless to say we do not fold George's hard-earned contribution into the family meal plan. The point: the distance between the cat's comprehension and ours is probably less than the distance between our understanding and God's. The Bible tells us as much.

As to the problem of evil—who knows? Easterbrook concludes this engaging book with an eloquent chapter on the Christian ethic of love and a plea for an end to tribalism, religious sectarianism, and hate. The *intellectual* solution to the problem of evil remains a mystery, but Scripture offers us a *practical* solution, and on this Easterbrook and I would probably agree. "Spiritual compassion," he writes, "holds the potential for resolving the world's ills." Indeed. The real "solution" to the problem of evil is love, the central imperative for all of us—orthodox, heterodox, and everybody in between. **NR**

Mr. Glynn, the associate director of the George Washington University Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies, is the author of *God: The Evidence* (Prima).

Fast Forward

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

The Future and Its Enemies, by Virginia Postrel (Free Press, 272 pp., $25)

THE invention of the personal computer brought in one of those brief periods of explosive creativity when twenty-year-olds with no paper qualifications could make fortunes by inventing useful goods. Being a software developer in 1980 was like being a steam-locomotive engineer in 1820, or an aircraft designer ninety years later. Nowadays, of course, you need four

Mr. Derbyshire, an NR contributing editor, is the author of *Seeing Calvin Coolidge in a Dream* (St. Martin's).

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graduate degrees and a king's ransom of liability insurance before anyone will let you design a plane. This has good and bad results. Good: planes are much safer than they were in 1910. Bad: nobody with the least flicker of imagination or creativity makes a career designing planes—which is why planes look just the same now as they did thirty years ago. Soon, no doubt, you will need a Commerce Department license to write computer programs.

There you have the trade-off between security and freedom, which every parent of small children wrestles with daily on a more intimate scale. In *The Future and Its Enemies* Virginia Postrel makes the case for "dynamism"—freedom, risk, and an "open" future, unplanned and unknown, emerging from the unfettered creativity of the human mind. The other side of her dichotomy is populated by "stasists"—reactionaries who dislike or fear change and technocrats who believe they can manage and direct change by dint of planning and social engineering. Ross Perot, with his charts and graphs and teams of experts ready to descend on and solve every one of our problems, is a stasist. So is Pat Buchanan, dreaming of a return to the 1950s. So is our next President, Al Gore, whose dim-witted technocratic power fantasies are quoted in Mrs. Postrel's book to hilarious effect.

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Human society is nothing but the human soul at large, and we humans are very slothful creatures.

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Mrs. Postrel is the editor of *Reason* magazine, flagship of the libertarian movement; but she makes a point of saying in her book that "dynamists aren't just libertarians with a new name." It seems to me, however, that the difference sets—dynamists who are not libertarians and vice versa—must be very small, so this is for the most part a libertarian tract. Still, *The Future and Its Enemies* is an ideas book, not an issues book. There is almost nothing here on those knotty topics that separate libertarians from the rest of the intellectual Right—immigration, for example, or drug legalization. Mrs. Postrel's aim is only to provide a defense of adventurous, optimistic attitudes to social and technological change. That she has done very admirably, with passion and vigor.

If the book has a fault, it is that Mrs. Postrel underestimates those enemies in her title, and the power of their appeal to our baser natures. Human society is nothing but the human soul at large, and we humans are very slothful creatures. A survey of those parts of the human race who have been given the opportunity to spend their whole lives doing nothing useful—the British aristocracy, for example—shows that the overwhelming majority embrace that opportunity with enthusiasm. So with our institutions. Every culture, in every age, has thrown up mechanisms to thwart and deny the potential of the gifted and energetic minority, from the trade guilds of medieval Europe to today's National Education Association. It is not difficult

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to see why this happens. As Mrs. Postrel herself writes, "A dynamist world is not a place of hedonistic lotus-eaters, but of continual striving—not simply to survive, but to improve." It all sounds so *strenuous*. What, no lotus-eating at all? I like Mrs. Postrel's book, and agree with her larger thesis; but I hope she will not mind my saying that she has been spending too much time with software entrepreneurs—people who work twenty-hour days and build fortunes doing something they love to do. She might try strolling round the back offices of the large company I work for, where the item of software most commonly to be seen running on employees' workstations is solitaire.

It should be heartening to read an author like Mrs. Postrel, one who speaks out clearly against the thickening tangle of laws and regulations that reaches ever deeper into our personal lives and private exchanges. Yet *The Future and Its Enemies*, though very worthy in itself, left me feeling glum. We are not short of books advocating liberty, wealth creation, and open-mindedness. What we *are* short of is public sentiment in favor of those things. I agree with Mrs. Postrel that we currently have too many laws, and way too many lawyers; but how many of our fellow citizens are of the same mind? In the recent elections in my state, Chuck Schumer, one of the candidates for U.S. Senate, boasted—boasted! in paid ads on prime-time television!—that he was a man with "a passion to legislate." He won handily. **NR**

■ MANNERS ■

Slow Food

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

THE Thanksgiving dinner I attended this year fell a little short of traditional. A German investment banker next to me described how he recently had been stalked by a girl he had dated a few times. He couldn't figure out what drove her to do this. Unless, he mused, it was that *vee-jo* of her, another woman, and himself engaged in sexual intercourse. A *vee-jo*? Yes, she kept pestering him for the *vee-jo* tape.

It wasn't a conversation you would have expected around Norman Rockwell's table. But formal meals at home are so rare nowadays that it's worth saying a word in their favor, *vee-jo*-toting Germans notwithstanding. Thanksgiving offers an occasion to do so, along with an article in the *Los Angeles Times* about a group of concerned Europeans called the Slow Food Movement.

The essential Slow Food insight is that food and its consumption are getting faster and faster, with worrisome consequences. The movement was founded in Paris in 1989, a few years after outraged food-traditionalists fought unsuccessfully to stop McDonald's from opening a franchise on Rome's Spanish Steps. A manifesto was drawn up, declaring: "We are enslaved by speed and have all succumbed to the same insidious virus: Fast Life, which disrupts our habits, invades the privacy of our homes, and forces us to eat Fast Foods." Nine years later the Slow Food Movement claims seventy thousand members in 35 countries, all rabidly opposed to Big Macs and the less-than-two-hour lunch.

The nineteenth-century French gourmet Anthelme Brillat-Savarin put it neatly: "The destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they feed themselves." If so, then the destiny of our own nation must seem increasingly in doubt.

Take the New York subway system. Mayor Giuliani has been fretting about the danger of terrorists' releasing biohazardous fumes in the train tunnels. But the real biohazard down there is the fumes of McDonald's hamburgers, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and other take-out items being eaten by neighboring riders. You don't just smell this stuff; you feel it entering your lungs like a greasy fist.

Above ground, the situation is much the same. Folks pace the sidewalks of Manhattan, head tilted up to let a piece of pizza slide down the gullet. There goes a youth with half a hot dog sticking out of his mouth. At the tonier end of the social spectrum, pricey take-out is the rule for time-deprived yuppies.

From the Slow Food perspective, news from the rest of the country is also pretty bad. Most troubling is the fate of family mealtime. As Patricia Hersch reports in her book *A Tribe Apart*, about the folkways of teenagers in Reston, Va., kids typically cook for themselves, forage in the kitchen for whatever take-out Mom or Dad may have brought home from work, or call Dominoes for a pizza. Family members eat separately, at each person's convenience.

The Slow Food-ites think they know what's at stake here. At their convention last month in Turin, Italy, attended by 100,000 people, one of them told the *L.A. Times*: "This is about preserving the pleasures of food and what it brings to people." If that's what all the complaining is about, then one might cheerfully endure the reeking subway cars. Imagine those stuck-up foreigners the morning they wake to find a Burger King enthroned next to every great palace, cathedral, and museum in Europe. That's entertainment!

In fact, however, the costs of convenience are steeper than the Spanish Steps. The best exegesis of the dinner table I've come across is by Daniel Lapin in his new book *America's Real War*.

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'The destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they feed themselves.'

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Rabbi Lapin probably understands the culture war better than anyone. Eating, he points out, is one of those activities that people share with animals, along with birth, death, sex, and passing waste. Traditional cultures were careful to place around each of these a hedge of rules and rituals. Otherwise a

Mr. Klinghoffer, an NR senior editor, is the author of *The Lord Will Gather Me In: My Journey to Jewish Orthodoxy*, just released by Free Press.

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person having sex, or eating, or defecating, can easily be mistaken for an animal. That possibility once bothered us because the radical distinction between people and pets was seen as a pillar of civilization.

The distinction is still upheld in some quarters. Even today, the bathroom is often the most civilized room in the house. Writes Lapin:

> At that moment when we look more like animals than at any other, it is a deep comfort to reflect upon the little soaps cast in the shape of seashells and upon the monogrammed hand towels. They remind us that although we are doing in private what most animals do in public, it would be a mistake to think of ourselves as animals. No animal decorates the room in which he relieves himself.

When they feel hungry, animals graze, nibbling leaves and grass as they find them. They hunt, and gobble their prey without standing on ceremony. If you put food in front of them, they will eat under any circumstance. A set table in one's own home—where the family gathers at a certain time, dining on china or glass, governed by seemingly pointless customs, with one fork for salad and another for the steak (why?)—reminds us that we are men, not monkeys.

Lately we prefer not to be reminded. The concept of "animal rights" peaked in national consciousness earlier in the decade. Back then, a woman couldn't wear a fur outside without worrying she would be pelted with red paint by individuals who thought she was wearing a cousin of theirs (see "Fur Flies," this page). But the recent appointment of "bioethicist" Peter Singer to an endowed chair at Princeton signals that the equation of humans and beasts is securely lodged at least in the minds of intellectuals. Mr. Singer is the apostle of "practical ethics" who refrains from condemning infanticide because a baby human has no more claim on our protection than does a baby rat.

Feel your dinner coming up? Let's hope you get your appetite back by next Thanksgiving, in time for the only formal meal many American families eat together all year round. Against the likes of Peter Singer, it may be our best bulwark. **NR**

■ STYLE ■

Fur Flies

PIA NORDLINGER

FASHION trends are easy enough to dismiss. Heroin-chic was repulsive; minimalism, a snooze; grunge, just a bit less offensive than a crime against humanity. But for the last few seasons, the fashion press has been hailing glamour as the style du jour. And along with glamour comes the world's most controversial fabric: fur.

Yes, fur is in vogue once more. Fox, mink, sable, and even the faux stuff have returned from the dungeon of political correctness. Celebrities—from rapper Mary J. Blige to author Danielle Steele—are swathing themselves in it.

And you can forget about your grandmother's floor-length jaw-dropper. This trend has nothing to do with the fur coats that hang dormant for 360 evenings a year. These days, fur is more Jennifer Lopez than Brooke Astor. More happy hour than high tea.

Designers are trimming casual clothes with fur and dying it in shocking colors. Fur accents or trim can be found on skirts, sweaters, cloth coats, shoes and boots, handbags, shrugs, and scarves. Then there are the envelope-pushing designers who are creating actual clothing with fur: Fendi has a knee-grazing sable skirt, and Versace boasts a white mink tank-top (a splendid perversion of form and function). Mink now comes in electric blue and pale pink. One finds fur covering even the most banal objects. Fendi, again, produced a fox-covered wheelie (the popular carry-on suitcase that rankles airline crews).

The trend has the trappings (ahem) of a paradigm shift: fur is now fun, rather than imposing. "More approachable," says John Nickleson, an assistant at Oscar de la Renta.

Mrs. Nordlinger is an editorial writer at the *New York Post*.

There is no agreed-upon single event that led to the resurgence of fur in fashion. The weather was certainly of little influence: no one buys fox-trimmed slip-on stilettos to keep her toes toasty. The economy may have played a role—making consumers more aggressive and designers more playful. Wendy Bounds, former fashion writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, points out that the economy had an impact at the conceptual stage: "Back when designers were preparing fashions for this season, at the end of 1997, the economy was booming. If money and luxury are in the back of your mind, what is a better way to express that than fur, beading, and other embellishments?" With a feisty economy at their backs, designers started toying with luxurious fabrics like velvet and pure cashmere, in addition to a smattering of feathers. So a fur revival made sense.

■

Forget your grandmother's floor-length jaw-dropper. These days, fur is more Jennifer Lopez than Brooke Astor. More happy hour than high tea.

■

Furriers, however, claim that the market for fur is independent of financial trends. "Some of the best years in the fur business have been when the economy was bad," says Ralph Romberg, Neiman Marcus VP for coats and fur. "During one year in the early Eighties, mortgages were at 12 per cent, but the fur business was booming."

If any other single factor counted for more than either a record-high Dow or a record-low winter, it was Madonna, which should come as no surprise to those familiar with her early incarnation as the original Material Girl. Pivotal in the return of fur, according to Degen Pener of *Entertainment Weekly*, was the October 1996 issue of *Vogue*, in which Madonna was photographed in fur-laden costumes for the movie musical *Evita*. Most unfortunately, Madonna's status as prime mover behind American popular culture is now highly suspect,

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owing to her recent and inexplicable adoption of a British accent.

Even if Madonna could all by herself turn America into a pelt paradise, trouble would not be far away. The ever-vigilant People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals slumbers not—though hardly inflicting the reign of terror they did during the 1980s. In 1996, a PETA activist walked into a restaurant and threw a dead raccoon onto the table of *Vogue* editor (and fur aficionado) Anna Wintour. Last January, PETA leader Dan Mathews led an infiltration of Dolce & Gabbana's Milan boutique. The activists, part of an "international boutique blitz," occupied a display window while smearing red paint on themselves and their fake fur costumes. In a more benign anti-fur campaign, known as "Models of Compassion," world-famous fashion models have pledged their refusal to wear fur. Cindy Crawford, übermodel and pledge signatory, caused a brief schism when she appeared in a Revlon advertisement wearing a fur wrap. The fur was fake, so PETA refrained from ditching Miss Crawford. But when Naomi Campbell modeled a sable coat in 1997, she was summarily "fired" from the organization.

According to PETA, both the fashion world and furriers are deluding themselves if they think people will ever again buy fur in the quantity they once did. "The fashion magazines can say that fur is back," says PETA spokesperson Jenny Woods, "but customers are not buying it." Maybe so. But your typical woman is still less concerned about the thought police than about the fashion police. "There is definitely less [anti-fur] pressure than there was in the late Eighties and early Nineties," confirms Larry Schulman of Alexandre Furs.

Will fur remain hip? Monica Lewinsky is not known to have worn fur, but seeing as she is the nation's best reflection of everygirl consumer habits, the Fur Information Council of America might consider making a donation to that much-inspected wardrobe. Or better yet, the Big Creep could give her a fur himself: what a perfect way to say "I'm sorry." **NR**

■ FILM ■

Songbirds & Skinheads

JOHN SIMON

I WASN'T all that keen on Jim Cartwright's original stage play *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*; I am still less so on the movie version, which besides shrinking the title to ***Little Voice*** diminishes the work itself. Mark Herman, who gave us the delightful *Brassed Off*, has again adapted a stage piece and directed it, this time to less good effect. It is the tale of Laura, known as Little Voice, or LV for short, who with her late father, the owner of a small-town record shop, used to listen raptly to LPs of Judy Garland, Shirley Bassey, Marlene Dietrich, and other chanteuses. With her father dead, LV is at the mercy of her termagant mother, from whom she retreats into her attic room and record collection. She sings along with those popular singers and can impersonate them to uncanny perfection.

When not alone and singing, LV is shyness personified. Small, with childlike blonde bangs over a sweetly homely face, she hardly speaks, much to her gabby mother's annoyance. The mother, Mari, is involved with Ray Say, chief impresario of the English seaside town of Scarborough. Ray has flunked out of the big time in London, Mari is well past her prime: the two losers take to each other with a gusto born of anxiety. Their relationship is depicted comically, but with an edge of sadness down to their exaggerated clothes and not entirely cozy banter.

Off to the side is Billy, a young assistant telephone repairman, timid and taciturn, comfortable only with the pigeons he breeds. Yet Dwayne, his most fine-feathered friend, has forgotten he is a homing pigeon and flown the coop. While repairing Mari's telephone, Billy meets LV, and they attract each other. Now Ray discovers LV's vocal talent and sees in her his last big chance as an impresario. But the acutely timorous LV shies away from public performance. And yet . . . but enough of that.

It is a fiercely improbable story, but it does involve some interesting characters. Aside from the aforementioned, there are Sadie, the grotesquely obese neighbor who worships Mari and LV, and Mr. Boo, owner of the town's biggest nightclub, where between the awful acts he fobs off his own equally awful MC-ing. And there is Scarborough itself, a Potemkin village with a charming horseshoe-shaped bay and, beyond it, mingy, industrial streets and benighted inhabitants.

Herman has depoeticized the play's language (not that much of a loss) and opened up the action. Yet it is confinement that the play capitalized on, what with Mari yelling from below and LV unresponsive upstairs, refusing to be coaxed down, or descending only to cast a pall on the bustle below. But Herman's changes have not greatly harmed a contrived plot, and his casting, at any rate, is flawless.

■

You might just make a meal from *Little Voice*, lean cuisine though it is.

■

Jane Horrocks, with her expert impersonations, was born to play LV in a part and play created by the author especially for her. But such a talent seems more appropriate to a London actress than to a provincial mouse. Still, her performance works, although somewhat less well on screen, where the audience may (unjustly) suspect trickery. Brenda Blethyn re-creates the part of Mari and is, despite a regional accent thicker than anybody else's, very fine in her blend of callousness and pathos. No less remarkable is the Ray of Michael Caine, whom the depredations of age on top of his natural talent for lowlife parts catapult to a summit performance.

The dependable Jim Broadbent, as the seedy Mr. Boo, finds the humanity in tawdriness. Annette Badland's even

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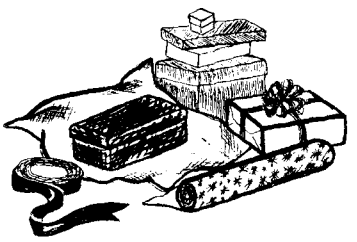
more pathetic Sadie is as sterling as she was on stage, and Ewan McGregor, at the opposite end of the scale from his signature role in *Trainspotting*, struggles manfully with the underwritten part of Billy. If your expectations from *Little Voice* are modest enough you might just make a meal of it—lean cuisine though it is.



■ ***American History X*** has itself a strange history. Terry Kaye, a 46-year-old British MTV and commercial-filmmaker, directed and shot this as a five-hour film. He was still fiddling with it after a year in post-production, costing another million and a half. Thereupon New Line Cinema snatched it away from him and let the star, Edward Norton, recut it, allegedly in the director's presence, to two hours. Kaye threatened to have his name removed and organize protests wherever the film was shown, but made good on neither threat. Self-admittedly, he suffers from a Kubrick complex, though (unadmittedly) lacking Kubrick's talent.

The film's cut version does manage to hustle along without too noticeable a limp. Inevitably, however, some scenes feel foreshortened, others merely indicated by an opening shot. The hero's change from rabid skinhead to solid citizen after his prison experience is made less persuasive by a certain jerky episodicity. Even so, the film is not without power in its crucial sequences, greatly helped by fine performances. Further, Kaye and his screenwriter, David McKenna, have a good eye—or two—for the telling detail.

Derek Vinyard and his adoring younger brother, Danny, become even closer after their fireman father is shot to death by a black man while putting out a blaze in a crack house. Even before that, their father was inculcating racism and xenophobia in them. Oddly—if not incredibly—both Doris, the mother, and Davina, the studious sister, remain staunch liberals throughout, although Doris is driven to heavy smoking and a racking cough.

One night while the now full-fledged skinhead Derek (shaved sconce, mustache curling into a goatee, large swastika tattooed on chest, further mean tattoos on back and arms, Nazi paraphernalia all over the bedroom) is having violent sex with his neo-Nazi girlfriend (played by the obnoxious Fairuza Balk), three blacks are breaking into his car. Alerted by Danny, Derek charges out in his briefs and shoots two of the men as the third escapes. Of the others, one is merely wounded, and Derek kills him in the most horrifying way. Danny is awestruck.

Derek winds up in jail, where he first joins other skinheads, but is put off by their drug-trafficking with Mexicans. On laundry duty, he is befriended by Lamont, a young black who teaches him to relax and protects him from the ire of other black inmates. The skinheads, angered, gang rape Derek in the shower with the (unexplained) collusion of a white guard.

Out of prison, Derek is a changed man. He wants to break with the past and move away with his family. His good angel continues to be Sweeney, the black high-school history teacher who once taught him and now teaches and tries to straighten out Danny. His evil angel is Cameron Alexander, the white supremacist ideologue, who has organized the West Coast's white gangs into one big neo-Nazi movement. Derek and his family, caught in the middle of a racial war, are headed for tragedy—and the film's melodramatic finish.

How to judge a movie cut down from five to two hours? And would the five-hour version—any five-hour version—be that much better? Tony Kaye's camera work is good, though verging on arty, and shooting the past in monochrome and the present in full color is effective. But Anne Dudley's score, which even resurrects the cliché disembodied choir, is annoying, as is the ponderous preachiness of Sweeney as played by Avery Brooks. Many others are fine, notably Beverly D'Angelo (Doris), Guy Torry (Lamont), and especially Edward Furlong (Danny). But the reason to see *American History X* is Edward Norton. His sensitive, various, nuanced, and powerful performance is a history-making achievement. **NR**

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■ ART ■

Feywatch

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

'CONFOUND Victoria, and the slimy inhibitions/She loosed on all us Anglo-Saxon creatures!" That was what the New England poetess Amy Lowell thought back in the 1920s. To judge by a fascinating exhibition (and the response to it) currently on view at New York's Frick Collection, hers is an opinion still with us today.

For the Victorian era is the foundation of our own, and, as such, it has now become yet another battleground in the culture wars. Bring the Victorians down to our level, and we can reassure ourselves that our shambles of a society is really not that bad.

The exhibition is called "Victorian Fairy Painting" and it is dedicated to our tiny fluttering friends. The little people hover, frolic, and entice in canvas after canvas, along with a supporting cast of goblins, elves, and imps.

Strange to us, yes, but in their mid-Victorian heyday, these pictures were popular, in tune with their era. According to reviews of this show, they are also in tune with our own age. Writing in *The New Yorker*, Peter Schjeldahl notes that "this stuff . . . feels right on time for us." Leslie Camhi at the *Village Voice* likewise uses the fairies to admit the Victorians to our own idiot carnival. Both periods, apparently, have "seen the revival of druidism, crystal worship, and a host of ancient spiritual practices."

So were the Victorians old-time New Agers? Writing in *New York* magazine, Mark Stevens claims that the Victorian interest in the occult "honored what could not be explained or ruled." I doubt it. The New Age rejection of the scientific method would have appalled a nineteenth-century culture obsessed with the search for explanations and rules. With their relatively primitive science, the Victorians may have come to some loopy conclusions, but they were at least trying to get at the truth.

Yes, that's right, the truth. Unlike many of us post-moderns, the Victorians believed in an objective truth. But not, for the most part, in fairies. Even in art. To get the supposed pixiemania in proportion, take a glance, for instance, at the leading paintings of the 1846 Royal Academy Exhibition. They're a down-to-earth lot, far from any enchanted glades. Highlights include Mulready's *Choosing the Wedding Gown*, four animal pictures by Landseer, and Redgrave's thrilling *Sunday Morning—The Walk from Church*.

It is no coincidence that a number of the most striking works on display at the Frick are by painters who were outsiders. The greatest of them all, Richard Dadd, murdered his father. His obsessively detailed masterpiece, *The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke*, was the product of nine years' work in a lunatic asylum. That's also where Charles Doyle (father of the creator of Sherlock Holmes) ended up. His *Self-Portrait, A Meditation*, shows a man all too aware that the spirits surrounding him are the product of a troubled mind.

And they were certainly nothing to do with pollution. In a Sierra Club twitch, the Frick tries to explain the fairy paintings as "an escape from the grim elements of an industrial society." Not really. Arcadian fantasy had been around long before the factories of Victorian England. It is a nice irony, however, that the great engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel was the man responsible for commissioning the only fairy painting by Queen Victoria's favorite artist, Edwin Landseer. Actually, he wanted a Shakespearean theme for his dining room. What he got was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, featuring a sultry Titania, and Bottom, of course.

In fact, quite a number of bottoms. Offbeat nudity was a good part of this genre's appeal—both at the time and to later critics eager to show that the nasty Victorians were both repressed and (bonus!) perverse. To Mr. Schjeldahl these paintings exemplify "Anglo-sexual hysteria." More cautiously, the Frick's own introduction to the show refers to an "indulgence of new attitudes towards sex." "Hysteria," a "new attitude"? Nudie pics were popular long before the appearance of the fey babes now tumbling along the walls of the Frick.

Tumbling, one must admit, in a way not normally associated with Victorian Britain. Yet this was a Britain where John Simmons's *Titania*, a lissome blonde vaguely draped in the most diaphanous of robes, could be displayed without scandal. For that, thank the butterfly wings sprouting from the fairy queen's shoulders. They took Titania out of the real world and transformed her into something too ethereal for the grubby business of sex. To Michael Kimmelman in the *New York Times*, all this is "a form of collective sexual denial that is a root of the phrase 'there'll always be an England.'"

John Simmons, *Titania* (1866)

Oh, come on (full disclosure: I'm English). Foxy fairies were just an update of an old trick. Earlier artists had used "classical" themes (a "Venus" here, a "Sabine Woman" there) in much the same way. Ultimately, these paintings were just about fun. As Charles Dickens understood, "Fairy tales should be respected. . . . A nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun." Sentimental and coy they may have been, but to most of their fans, the fairies were just otherworldly entertainment, a very small part of a very rich culture, little more than the science fiction of an era when imagination was lagging behind technology.

If we try to project our own obsessions onto them, it is we, not the Victorians, who are in Never-Never Land. **NR**

Mr. Stuttaford lives in New York.

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■ CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS ■

MEMORANDUM

To: All NR Classified Advertisers
From: Tony Savage

One of the (many) pleasures of my (various) jobs here at NR has been the opportunity to write this little year-end valentine to all of you who have advertised with us during the past 12 months. I do so again in this final issue of 1998, restating the great joy I have taken from the relationships we have experienced, however tangentially. Our exchanges, whether over the telephone, or by mail, have been uniformly pleasant and rewarding.

This section of the magazine is devoted to one of the purest concepts of the free market: a forum to bring together willing sellers and willing buyers. And, as always, I hope the various transactions initiated here were beneficial to all parties involved.

It has been a tumultuous year, politically, and I reflect, bemusedly, and with a certain sense of irony, on all the anti-Clinton T-shirt and bumper sticker ads we ran in these pages during the early years of the Big Creep's Administration. Those of you who "put your money where your mouth is," and made a stand, were so very prescient in your beliefs. The general "Impeach Bill Clinton" sentiment you expressed in 1992 has come full-circle, six years later. As we slouch toward the new millennium, let us all pray that there will be a renewed sense of hope for the Republic, and somewhere down the line, salvation for the same.

Meanwhile, thanks again for making the Right Choice, i.e., the decision to advertise your goods and services in National Review. And I wish you all a wonderful holiday season, and a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year.

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

So Saddam Has Won, What Now?

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 4

IN tight quarters with analysts of enormous experience, bonded by a concern for American strategic interests, the question of Iraq came up.

One man (we'll call him Esterhazy) told that the United Nations Special Commission charged with following up leads that would reveal Iraq's maneuvering to arm with weapons of mass destruction tripped across a very hot lead. Secretary Albright was in India. Suddenly summoned to Geneva to a special meeting of the UN Security Council she expected a revelation in the matter of Iraq and weapons development. But there was a long stall. She did not receive the information and the search party in Iraq was held away. This little diplomatic deflection gave Saddam Hussein the time to reach in and grab the suspect material before it became, so to speak, public property.

What was it? A cache of weapons? Of poison? Of chemical weapons? No, it was documentation on where the stuff was hidden and what were the plans to continue to hopscotch it about from hiding place to hiding place in order to keep it out of the sight of the UN inspectors. Why had Mrs. Albright not been clued in? Because, opines Esterhazy, the White House didn't want to come upon evidence that would absolutely have required hard armed intervention.

Why not?

A second analyst stepped forward (we'll call him Mannheim). Here is the basic reason why the White House, advised by the Pentagon, doesn't want to take Baghdad on. It is that there is no way to do the job without running into impossible problems at home.

Recall (Mannheim said) that if President Bush had had to rely only on the Democrats on the matter of the 1991 U.S. intervention in Iraq, he would not have had the backing to proceed with what was, in the short term, the most successful massive military operation in modern history. The Democrats were reluctant because of the Vietnam syndrome. This is widely known, and here the pacifists join hands with American isolationists. Arthur Schlesinger, in January 1991, intoned that the prospective operation was not worth the life of a single U.S. soldier. And it was believed that the U.S. could not stay firm up against successive, day by day, week by week CNN accounts of casualties, foreign let alone American.

This did not happen, Mannheim reminded us. But an effective operation against Baghdad would be very very bloody indeed. Just to begin with, there would be hostages, every American and European Saddam Hussein could scoop up. Begin then with the military objectives. If you do not take out the Republican Guard, which is the mainstay of Saddam's power, you have accomplished nothing. But in order to smash it, the command posts need to be targeted and missiles of less than fine-tuned size need to be dropped. Actually to pulverize the fighting strength of Saddam requires saturated attacks on targeted areas of Iraq.

Over how long a period of time?, the obvious question was asked.

Two months was Mannheim's estimate. Exactly, Esterhazy agreed. "And that's why the White House isn't going ahead. There is no way to win it unless the character of U.S. citizens alters, in the matter of accepting casualties: not only our own, but casualties, faithfully reproduced hour after hour on the news, of civilians."

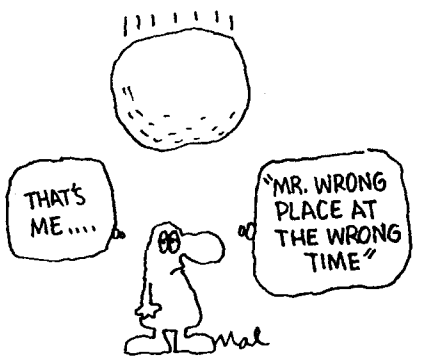
What then is forecast?

Inasmuch as Saddam Hussein has mastered the art of delay, we are coming very quickly (one year, in the estimation of Esterhazy) to the point when the United Nations will no longer approve a continuation of sanctions. Saddam will have said: Look, it's been eight years and you have come up with no hidden weapons. The sanctions' removal will mean a flow of wealth (though reduced by the low price of oil) sufficient to build hardware yet again. And the weapons of mass destruction will come up from the catacombs they have danced about in.

What then will we need to rely upon?

If we tackled the challenge quickly and decisively we could develop, based on Aegis technology, anti-missile theater defense. To do it right, we'd have to begin by announcing our withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and its constricting provisions.

And then too, Israel has an atom bomb.



Maneuvers & Counter-Maneuvers

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 1

HERE is a synopsis on the Clinton situation, wrenched out of the busy events of the past few days and including the exegeses on the Sunday talk shows.

1. White House Management feels the need to handle the perjury count on two fronts. One front calls for acknowledging the lies, in the between-us-kids mode—Yeah, I had sex with the girl and denied it. To the other forum, which is the Justice Department, the line is, Who says I lied?! My lawyers are on record as saying I never committed perjury.

2. That line is complicated by the language required to plead Management's innocence. It boils down to, How do you define sexual relations? Management's position is that what he did with "that woman" wasn't "sexual relations," as the term is defined here and there. But an etymological Congressional debate on the question isn't something he wants to burden his defenders in the House of Representatives with. "We will now examine the question, Is fellatio sexual relations? Mr. Conyers, you have ten minutes."

Management does not want to back up into that situation. On the other hand, it wants to emerge from this great swim across the angry sea with a bone in its mouth to present to the prosecution in the year 2001: "I never admitted to perjury."

3. So then two prosecutors, Congress now, the judicial system down the road, are to proceed on different assumptions. Congress isn't really debating the question whether perjury has been committed. The House knows the answer to that one—Yes, perjury was committed. The House will stick to the question, is perjury an impeachable offense? The need is very clear to register some kind of dismay over what Clinton did, but the language in which the rebuke is framed is very important to Management. If it is over-severe, that puts Congress on the spot for failing to proceed with conviction. But if it is etiolated beyond recognition, those Ameri-

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cans who want at least enough moral heat out of Congress to warm the tips of their fingers will be utterly disillusioned, and the freeze might last right through elections in November 2000.

4. So the House is left with a clear-cut perjury notwithstanding the formalistic denials of Management's legal team. Those who believe that Mr. Clinton has disqualified himself as competent to serve as President keep telling us that perjury is a very serious business. Congressman Hyde has said time and again that in the absence of the enforcement of the law on perjury the whole foundation of democratic government is shaken. But something is obviously needed in order to dramatize the gravity of the offense. Since everyone is committed to equal justice under the law, why not propose to President Clinton that he pardon everyone in federal jail who has been sent up for perjury?

5. Management's handling of the 81 questions was certainly provocative, beginning with the very first, in which Mr. Clinton telegraphed his tactics by refusing to answer point blank even the question, Are you the chief law enforcement officer of the United States? What evidently rankled the most was Management's answer on the matter of gifts over the months in question made to Monica Lewinsky. There were thirteen of these gifts. The tactic was to acknowledge "probable" gifts of chocolates and sun glasses. As to the balance, "I do not remember giving her the other gifts although I might have. As I have previously testified, I give a very large number of gifts." The list included: An Annie Lennox compact disk, a large Rockettes blanket, and a marble bear's head carving. If this is a stock inventory of Mr. Clinton's gifts, it is time to call the doctor. If he truly doesn't remember giving these gifts to Monica he should be asked if he remembers where Moscow is and whether the budget is balanced.

6. The Democrats are rallying around the idea of censure. If they can do this, the maneuver avoids a great many difficulties. The impeachment proceeding would be aborted, and quarrels about whether a censure motion against the President is proper activity for the House of Representatives can be left to scholars to wrangle over. But what then becomes the battleground is the language in which the censure resolution will be phrased. The pressure, by the Democrats, will be to ease up on the language. But it is unlikely the Republicans will countenance sheer euphemisms.

This, then, will be Lady Macbeth time. Will Mr. Clinton feel the wound? Or will he succeed in simply ignoring it, as he has his oath of office?

The Entrapment of Pinochet

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 27

ON the Pinochet front you can take the position that what we are looking at is gestating international law to discourage political savagery. But that vision is defaced by the reality of it all, which is that political passion is the prime mover. Politics shows its face at many levels. Primary among them is that special bitterness that attaches to any right-wing derailment of a government's march to the left.

The Father of this bitterness is Franco Spain. For decades you could not mention Franco's name without remobilizing the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Some time after the world war, reality set in and Franco's Spain was made a member of NATO. After a while, having arranged for a democratic successor, Franco left the scene. If he were still alive, no doubt Judge Baltasar Garzon would have him up before the handiest court, to prosecute him for crimes against humanity.

An attempt at orderly thought begins by asking the question: Under what authority is Pinochet detained?

There are numerous UN-related resolutions on political crime and responsibility for it. But the events surrounding the detention of Pinochet are an extraordinary improvisation. Suddenly we had five "Law Lords" deciding on behalf of what seemed the entire world, whether Pinochet should be allowed to return to his home or stay to face extradition proceedings to Spain. *Le Figaro* of Paris remarked that "for the first time, perhaps, a juridically incompetent tribunal has rendered a verdict of universal significance. Since no international tribunal exists to judge such events, the English judges took the place of this institution which it is now more necessary than ever to decide to create."

One guesses that the above sounds more lucid in French than in translation, but one is certainly left wondering: When did all legal infrastructure happen? Just who gave Spain the right to detain a Chilean in Great Britain, for an alleged crime associated with the inherently convulsive affairs of revolution and anti-terrorism?

The easy polarizations are lazy and irresponsible. They tell us that we are seeing a fight between democracy and tyranny. Between human rights and oppression. Between those who believe in the responsibilities of a chief of state and those who take shelter under the pre-Nuremberg idea that subordinates simply carry out orders.

One way to achieve perspective on the situation is to speculate on who might be subject to similar handling, under the Pinochet Protocol. The rules seem to be: Any sometime chief of state in whose regime one or more citizens, or indeed foreigners, were tortured or held hostage, can be held in place and extradited to a plaintiff court.

If Nixon were alive, could he safely have traveled to Great Britain, given the absolute certainty that acts of torture, however isolated, were committed against the Viet Cong during the war? Is there one living former Prime Minister of Israel who could dare to travel, given his susceptibility under this kind of scrutiny? Will they arrest Gorbachev next time he comes by? It would be a half-day's work to come up with the record of one KGB victim during 1985–1991.

There is politics at every level of the current affair, including the suspicion in some quarters that Prime Minister Tony Blair's dispossession of the successor members of the House of Lords plays a role (appease the Left by detaining Pinochet). What is needed is a device that serves to release Pinochet to go home to his country that doesn't suggest indifference by the British government to human rights and to the attempt gradually to make cosmopolitan life more difficult for bloody dictators.

That device, surely, would focus on the concept of entrapment. General Pinochet had every reason to feel secure when in London, which he had several times visited since leaving office as President of Chile. He was given VIP treatment at the airport. The sudden imposition of detention, on the motion of a foreign judge, caught Pinochet while in a hospital receiving medical treatment. Civilized arrangements should distinguish a Pinochet from an Adolph Eichmann, about whom it is reasonable to assume that whatever were the means for finding him and bringing him to justice, they're okay—just get him strung up.

If the various UN resolutions and the mutual legal assistant pacts and assorted understandings are going to prevail to the point of justifying the detention and extradition of such as Pinochet, then let that word get out. That would discourage international movements by former chiefs of state, especially those who, like Pinochet, were especially guilty of the sovereign offense of rescuing their country from a Communist takeover. Those who brought on Left revolutions will presumably be unmolested. If Baltasar Garzon protested Fidel Castro's recent appearance in Spain, his cries went unheeded.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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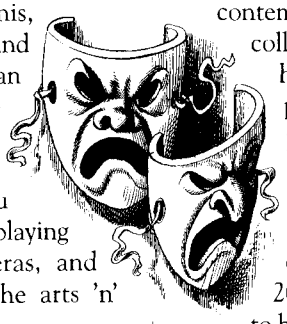
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

DEAR Gentle Readers: Here we are again, the last issue of the year and time for my Christmas letter. I always look forward to it because it's the only time I don't have to argue a point or prove anything. I can just relax and write an ordinary letter, the kind I write to Andy Ferguson—minus the unprintable jokes, of course—and be as meandering as I wanna be.

I'll start with the cheerful news. I've stuck to my Passive Suicide Diet and am thinking of writing a cookbook called *This Will Kill You*. Here's a sample menu. B: two fried eggs with scrapple; L: chili over rice; D: three martinis, ham steak, creamed corn, and cheese rolls. My object is an obit containing words like "suddenly" and "massive." Before you start chiding me, ask yourselves this: Can you see me in a nursing home, playing bingo, watching soap operas, and being called "honey" by the arts 'n' crafts lady?



This year I had a golden opportunity to dabble in my favorite anthropological hobby of idiom-dating. Did it strike you as strange that Monica's famous soiled dress was invariably called a "cocktail dress" by media people in their twenties and thirties? They don't even drink cocktails; where did they get that anachronism? It conjured up a picture of Monica rustling around in a taffeta number with a circular skirt down to mid-calf and a halter neck that bared the back—i.e., the dress I had in 1953, which I called a cocktail dress. Now tell me this: Who, of all those involved in the scandal, is exactly my age? Answer: Lucianne Goldberg.

Judge not, lest ye be judged judgmental. That's okay, I don't mind. The year brought three new hatreds, or at least clarifications of old ones. I finally put my finger on what it is about Geraldo Rivera that makes me recoil. He reminds me of the street stud in *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, Vivien Leigh's next-to-last movie, based on a Tennessee Williams novella about a rich American widow who buys love from European gigolos. Although able to afford the best, she cannot shake her fascination for the scruffy young tramp who follows her on her fashionable rounds and stares at her through the windows of five-star restaurants. The lower she sinks the more often he turns up, a symbol of her fate. Finally one night she sees him under the windows of her house. Zombie-like, her will gone, she tosses her key down to him.

I tried to like Ken Starr but his interview with Diane Sawyer finished him for me. What I feel now is not hatred but contempt, which is worse. The open-collar plaid shirt, calling his wife his "spouse," the whole dimple-flashing, soft-voicing, imploring routine made me want to throw up. We're going see a lot more of this when Compassionate Conservatism starts cranking up for Campaign 2000. What is this terrible need to be liked by liberals? If you have the good fortune to be a real S.O.B., don't spoil it.

Anybody who hates Windows as much as I do is bound to hate Bill Gates, but I have another bone to pick with him. He's neither eccentric in the Ford–Edison–Carnegie mold, nor a striding, steely-eyed psychopath of industry in the Ayn Rand mold. He is simply the living, breathing, whining personification of the word "brat."

I bought a ball of string the other day, and would you believe? It has a warning label: "Do not use in situations where personal safety could be endangered. Never use this product to secure large flat surfaces or objects which could 'airplane.' Misuse could result in serious injury or death."

Thank God for my diet. At least it will save me from one of those ignominious finales insurance companies call "household accidents." Imagine some graduate student of the future looking me up in *American Women Writers of the Twentieth Century* and reading: "She died suddenly from a massive misuse of string."

The mailman can't get all my catalogues into my box so I had to put an old card table in the lobby for the overflow. I've gotten expert at separating the wheat from the chaff, though I enjoy browsing through the latter for sociological insights.

A whole group of catalogues plays into the feeling of being overwhelmed. There's an organizer box for every conceivable kind of clutter, including the clutter that comes from having too many organizer boxes.

Another group plays into our desire to have *all* our problems solved by magic bullets. In the world of gizmo catalogues, utopia is a universal pot lid. No matter what is plaguing you, there's a non-stick, scratch-begone, wipe-away, wrinkle-free, iron-on, add-a-shelf cure for it. My favorite is the Bra Bridle: "At last! No more bra or slip straps sliding off your shoulders!" I suppose this would have been useful once, but nothing slides off me now; even water gets stuck.

NOW for my Catalogue-of-the-Year award. I bought a tam in the Lindsay tartan (no relation, I just like the colors) from a Celtic woolens catalogue. A month or so later I got the bagpipe catalogue, but the best was yet to come.

It came. Now I can order everything I'll need to take part in a re-enactment of the battle of Bannockburn from *Medieval Warfare Replicas*: claymores, maces, pole-axes, chain mail, bevor sallets (helmets), and a complete suit of Duke of Burgundy armor ("fully articulated and wearable") at the unbeatable price of $2,495.

I'd rather tilt at language abusers. If it's "just sex," is it also *Just Psychopathia Sexualis* by Richard von Krafft-Ebing? If there are no absolutes, why does everybody keep saying "Absolutely!" instead of yes? Now that "seeking closure" is the latest thing, why hasn't it occurred to anyone to look in the thesaurus for "write finis to"? And if Clinton would not let Monica soldier on to "completion," does that mean he's in control, out of control, a control freak, or just a freak?

Now for my New Year's Resolution. I will not try any more obscure POTUS jokes. From now on I'll confine myself to the one about the traveling salesman and the farmer's daughter. **NR**

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